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## Near East/South Asia Report

DYNAMICS OF CHANGE IN TUNISIA ANALYZED

By

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## NEAR EAST/SOUTH ASIA REPORT

### DYNAMICS OF CHANGE IN TUNISIA ANALYZED

Paris MAGHREB-MACHREK in French No 103, Jan-Feb-Mar 84 pp 5-70

[Articles by Michel Camau: "The Tunisian State: From Tutelage to Disengagement"; Mohamed Elbaki Hermassi, University of Tunis: "Tunisian Society: In the Islamist Mirror": Hassine Dimassi: "The Economic Crisis in Tunisia: A Crisis of Regulation"]

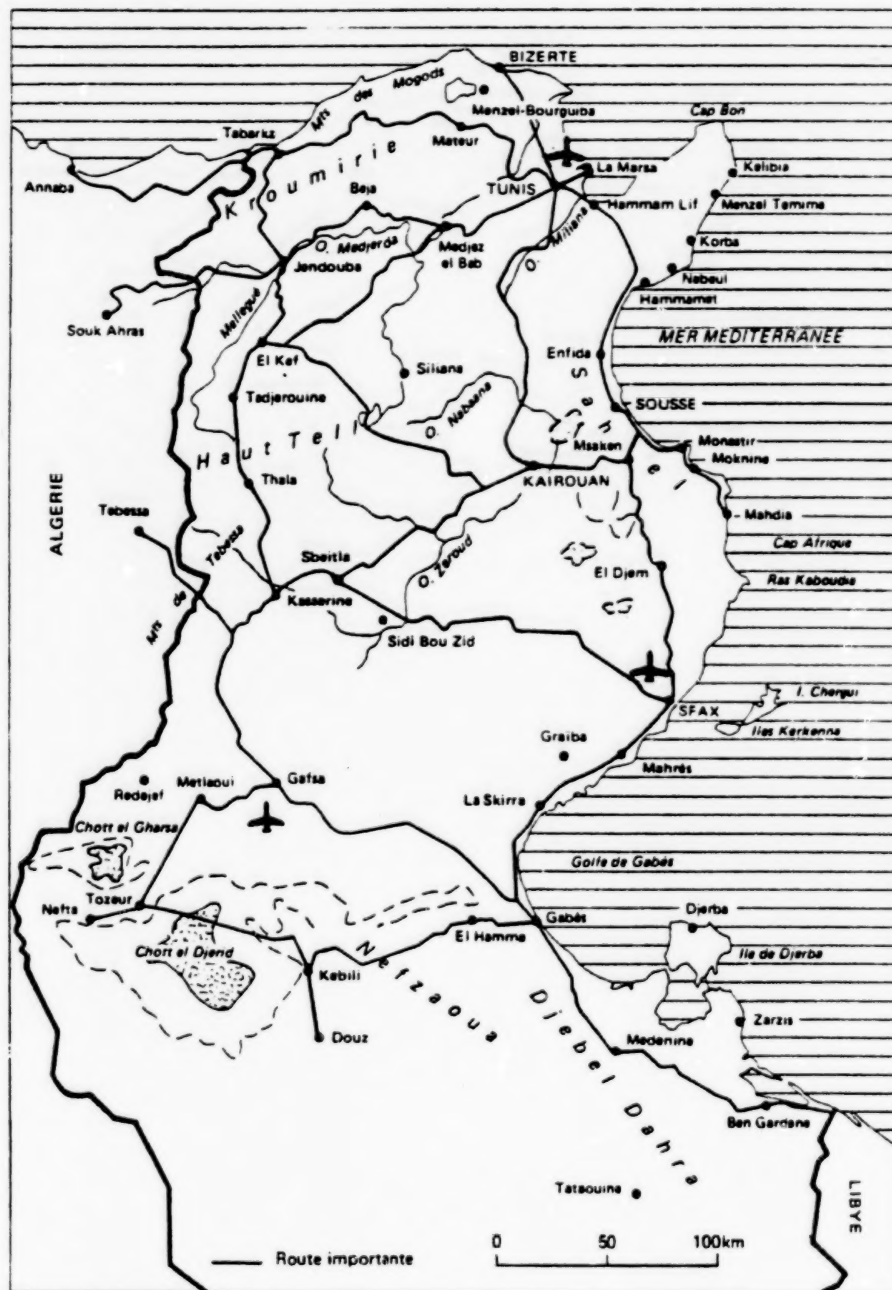
[Text] Where Is Tunisia Headed?

"Only the man walking on them feels the searing heat of the hot coals." (Old Tunisian saying)

Where is Tunisia headed? Asking the question is one way of trying to attract attention to a country which, beyond its own borders, no longer excites the curiosity of social scientists and, with all the more reason, ordinary mortals as it once did. It is true that Tunisia has little oil, occupies a small space and is not directly involved in any of the conflicts of which the Maghreb and the Machrek are the theater. But no more than by the number of its divisions, the importance of a country cannot be measured by its oil reserves or hegemonic designs. It may reside, among other places, in its exemplary nature, its ability to illustrate the dynamics of a historic phase, to prefigure the implications and stakes of changes taking place in one part of the globe. Tunisia's individuality is not solely found in a past buried in memoirs: the reign of Ahmed Bey, the "Young Tunisians," the pioneers of national trade unionism, the establishment of the Destour as a mass party, the entry of the Fellagha Movement on the scene. It is before our very eyes, provided we take the trouble of opening them! Tunisia is somewhat removed from the armed confrontations rending the Arab-Muslim region, but of all the Arab countries, it is the first in which the conflicts wrenching society are the subject of a kind of public recognition, if not coherent regulation. Consequently, it is a privileged observatory and a strategic place of change in Arab societies.

Where is Tunisia headed? No one could claim to answer the question by making predictions, however expert he might be. However, it is possible to discern the elements of an answer by evoking the major problems confronting Tunisia at the beginning of the 1980's. At least this was the ambition behind the proposal to gather together in a single issue of MAGHREB-MACHREK several contributions on Tunisia. Unable to meet the challenge of being exhaustive, the alternative of more synthetic studies was chosen, studies able to shed light

# Tunisia





on the dynamics of change, based on three different observation sites and with the help of approaches derived from different disciplines. Change was thus analyzed from the standpoint of problems of regulation, legitimation and motivation, explained separately, and mainly, by the weight of limitations and the interplay of economic driving forces (H. Dimassi), evolution of the state (Camau) and the emergence of a social movement, old and of a new type: Islamism (E. Hermassi). Given the articulation of the economic, political and cultural systems, the three articles engage in crosschecking, illustrations of a common thread. The risk inherent in the approach adopted does not consist in the possibility of repetition, but in the established fact of what is insufficiently stated and not stated at all. It cannot be denied that a field such as agriculture would in itself be deserving of a specific study. Likewise, one would have wished that an important dimension of change, that of the evolution of Tunisia's relations with the other Arab nations, would find its place in this collection. These are gaps of which the authors are aware and which they admit, not without expressing the wish that they be filled in the future by other contributions in subsequent issues of *MAGHREB-MACHREK*.

Where is Tunisia headed? This country, which passes for a model of moderation and a promoter of the policy of small steps, has turned out to be much more radical than many of its neighbors. Jean Poncet wrote in 1974 that the West would have liked to make Tunisia "a brilliant showplace of development made possible thanks to capital and technicians from the 'Free World', without any workers or peasant revolution, without communists in power" ("La Tunisie a la Recherche de Son Avenir"). The observation, which corresponds to a widespread opinion, is largely true with respect to the motivations for Western aid. But it presents the major disadvantage of underestimating the internal dynamics of independent Tunisia. The latter has not experienced a "revolution," if one gives the term the meaning it has in the culture of the European workers movement, a culture imbued with symbols and mobilizing myths emerging from the "precedents" of the French Revolution, the Paris Commune and the Soviet Revolution of 1917. Tunisia was nevertheless "revolutionized" by the political regime with which it was endowed upon emerging from the Protectorate. The regime, by embarking upon a policy of forced reform did in a way use a new representation of the state and the revolution. Nothing was missing from it, not even violence. Not massive armed violence but the rape of ways of living, being and thinking. The old law of operation of a society, hit hard by colonization, was abolished by a government that wanted to give birth if not to a new world, then at least to a new man. A new man was in fact born, but far from the image which the artisans of the upheaval had formed. The reform got out of control of its promoters, who now faced a society in conflict, one seeking a new law. Professional politicians were not the only ones to be surprised by the perverse effects of the forced reform. More than one "wise man" has nothing to envy them from this standpoint. Too frequently, the discourse of wisdom drifted off into a political discourse in which he thought he found the echo of his own standards. In particular, one thinks of the preconceived ideas on secularity, economic growth and the stability of the government. The contributions brought together in this volume endeavor precisely to show how the dynamics of change have exposed the limitations of these cliches. All three imply a question about the regime's

ability to counter the perverse effects of the reform, its ability to implement a formula for handling conflicts, conflicts whose existence it deserves credit for recognizing, unusual in the Arab world. The responses are varied because of the plurality of observation sites but also the diversity of problems. If one were to sum up the general tone, one could say that Hassine Dimassi believes that there is a crisis, which Michel Camau deems it difficult to avoid, and Elbaki Hermassi thinks it possible to overcome.

Where is Tunisia headed? The authors had practically completed their contributions when, on 19 November 1983, another step was taken in the direction of institutionalized recognition of political dissent, with the legalization of two opposition parties: the Socialist Democratic Movement (MDS) and the Popular Unity Movement - Provisional Committee. The event was too recent to modify their analysis in any way. But it is not inconceivable that in the future, it may contribute somewhat to giving the casting vote, in terms of its scope. It may express the determination of the regime to set up a new method of settling conflicts, of drafting a new operating law. It may only consist of the manifestation of good intentions capable of future development. Finally, it may only correspond to a new form of political tinkering. But politics turns out to be one of the few domains in which one cannot tinker with impunity.

30 November 1983

#### The Tunisian State: From Tutelage to Disengagement (Scope and Limitations of a Trajectory)

The temptation is great to maintain that the government of independent Tunisia, by "revolutionizing" the social fabric, has contributed to the emergence of a civil society that challenges its tutelary dimension. And yet, one must resist the temptation. An interpretation of this type<sup>1</sup> would be but an approximation fraught with ambiguities because of the vagueness concerning the very notion of civil society. Its attraction quite likely has to do with the fact that it connotes a return of history to its normal state. Let one be assured that it is not our intention to proceed to an exegesis of canonical texts in order to expound on the proper or improper use of the notion of civil society. Nevertheless, one is permitted to wonder what reality the notion is supposed to cover within the context of the Tunisia of the 1980's.

Would one suggest that the social relationships tend to resemble those of the bourgeois society, with the state being replaced by the marketplace as the main instance of regulation and integration? It is true that one is witnessing a broadening of the field of application of the laws governing the market. But that liberalization, which is both partial and selective, does not stem from the internal dynamics of a society in a process of homogenization. It corresponds to a form of response of the state to regulation requirements determined by the mode of inserting a fragmented society into the international division of labor. In other words, the horizon is not at all that of a self-regulated market constituting a bourgeois civil society.

Would the reference to the emergence of a civil society have to do with the advent of "corporations" expressing a tendency toward the autonomization of social institutions and thereby the beginning of a "private plot" of the state? Assuredly, the development at all levels of the associative phenomenon (from the Tunisian Association of Administrative Science to the Socialist Democratic Movement) constitutes a new factor that must be emphasized. But the recognition of the organic independence of the Tunisian General Federation of Labor (UGTT), no more than the legalization of the opposition parties, however important they may be, does not mean the removal of obstacles to an increased appreciation of the state as a pole of collective identification enjoying an autonomous base of legitimation.

To take notice of the limitations of a "civilist" approach does not amount to considering changes occurring within Tunisian society during a quarter of a century of independence as negligible. It is simply a matter of guarding against a shift that might jam the complexity and the contradictions tending to attenuate state control without basically renewing it. The relative disengagement of the state, observable in various areas of social life, and the densification of social relationships are not synonymous with the beginning of a new organic relationship between the state and society. They refer one to adjustments from the standpoint of regulation of the process of accumulation and supervisory mechanisms showing that the major problem remains that of the fragile constitution of the state, with the medical metaphor being transposable to legal language.

#### Problems of New State

The political regime that has presided over the destiny of Tunisia since independence has demonstrated remarkable longevity. It has succeeded in overcoming crises which, at different stages of its growth, threatened its unity or very existence. This characteristic, which is not notably widespread in the Third World, bears witness to the strength and vitality of its leadership. On the other hand, it in no way overestimates those of the state.

No one would dream of denying that Tunisia is endowed with a solidly established government machine, which exercises sovereign authority within a territorial framework marked by recognized borders. But unless one confines oneself to a prosaically realistic conception of the nation state, one could not consider the case truly closed. Beyond the structures and the men that give it shape, the state phenomenon consists of a system of collective representation and mediation of conflicts. It is precisely at this level that one sees the basic fragility of the new state emerging from Tunisian independence.<sup>2</sup> That state is lacking a basis of legitimation truly its own. This proposition, which remains to be explained, presumes a double distinction, between state and rulers, legitimation and support. Mobilization of the consensus by the political power takes the form of support when that support is directed toward the persons in government and shaped in terms of their action. Support is therefore by definition conditional and specific. On the other hand, legitimation transcends political personnel and the contingencies of the situation. It is analyzed as support for the state, in the sense that it has to do with the basic values of a political community. It is clear that legitimation and



support are closely linked.<sup>3</sup> But if the state is confused with those governing, there is practically no room except for potential support. From this standpoint, one might say, based on the terminology of J. Habermas, that the Tunisian State suffers from a structural deficit of legitimation.

We shall endeavor to explain the why and how of this deficit, considering the importance of its implications. The stability of the government turns out to be dependent upon its effectiveness in the processes of mobilizing and allocating resources. However, by virtue of their impact and influence, the latter are in themselves factors of instability.

#### Totalist Nationalism and Ambiguities of Statism

One can attribute to the deficiency of legitimation a structural nature insofar as it was detectable in the very dynamics of creation of the new state. It is part of a totalist nationalism<sup>4</sup> centered around the state but within the framework of a "passive revolution."

At the time of independence, the state apparatus was invested by a political-administrative elite that subordinated the different social groups to itself by absorbing their leaders. This elite, which took shape based on simultaneous phenomena of social ascension, changes in class and adaptation,<sup>5</sup> expressed the fence-straddling position of the middle classes in a society fragmented by the multiplicity of modes of insertion in the colonial economy and the overlapping of industrial and primordial-type cleavages. Through the channel of the Neo-Destourian Party, it had taken on a unifying and integrating program that subordinated all special demands and aspirations to the slogans independence and state nationalization.

Integrated nationalism articulated two previously distinct dimensions of Tunisian political culture: on the one hand, the "Young Tunisian" reformism, characterized by an approach with the state as an agent of change in society and an activation of the Tunisian personality based on the notion of homeland;<sup>6</sup> and second, the populism of the pioneers of the trade union movement (Mohamed Ali, Tahar Haddad), which leaned, beyond the trade union demands toward "a sociological remaking of society."<sup>7</sup> However within the Neo-Destourian elite, that reformism whose objective was social homogenization, was subordinate to the winning of independence. Reform of society was not envisaged as a task necessary for the construction of the future state. It would be the work of that state. Integrated nationalism assured the convergence toward the future state of the aspirations of the different component parts of a society made heterogeneous by the impact of colonial capitalism, without separating the new political community from the thread of the other fields of solidarity. Furthermore, it relied on the potential of mobilizing supra- or infrastate commitments in order to found the state. Mohamed Cherif notes in this connection that "Tunisian nationalism never abolishes, within the broad masses of the people, their feeling of belonging to a Muslim *umma* [community] and an Arab *koine*" and that it "coated modeled and colored an Arab-Muslim substratum that nourished and fortified it."<sup>8</sup> Similar observations could be formulated concerning the relations of nationalism with primordial-type commitments and tendencies springing from one's affiliation with a region or line. Nationalism

brought about no transfer of these loyalties to the state. It channeled them, bestowing upon them a function of mediation of the relationship to the state.

The expression of a "passive revolution" in the context of colonization, integrated nationalism postulated a "revolution from the top" once independence had been gained. The new state concealed two distinct realities: On the one hand, it could be analyzed as a hegemonic apparatus outside of society. The heir of the colonial state, it extended alien forms. It did take on an indigenous, national dimension, but while identifying outright with a political-administrative elite enjoying a strong base of support. In addition, it entailed the proposal for the foundation of a new solidarity, the creation of a political community distinct from the community and communities. The establishment of a base of legitimation founded on the power of support was in the final analysis its rationality, that of a revolution from the top. The implementation of this proposition encountered dilemmas difficult to overcome.

State reformism implied a social homogenization through a modernization of structures and behavior. In this connection, the two state functions of socialization and regulation of the process of accumulation would be exercised in partnership: The regulation of accumulation would not only be determined by the deficiencies of the market, but also by the imperatives of social integration. It is a well-known fact that the process of modernization, to use the expression of Régis Debray, dignifies "the archaism of mentalities."<sup>9</sup> Regionalism constitutes the very prototype of these false archaisms. It corresponds to a double phenomenon of desegregation of a social organization founded on primordial bonds and a modernization of those same bonds.

Colonial capitalism destroyed the precarious balance characterizing relations between tribes, village communities and old inner cities. In different ways, it subordinated the different component parts of the old society to a new mode of economic and state organization. In so doing, far from annihilating individual characteristics, it renewed their content. The primordial forms of organization and social representation were basically altered, but they serve as channels of expression for aspirations and commitments stemming from the new mode of organization. From this standpoint, one can say that there has been an interpenetration of industrial- and primordial-type cleavages. Thus, from its very formation, the Tunisian Workers Movement was deeply marked by the weight of regional solidarity. Likewise the Tunisian bourgeoisie was formed with regionalist bases. It found its skeleton in the Sfax and Jerbian bourgeoisies, labeled by H. de Montety as kinds of "ethnic corporations."<sup>10</sup>

This factor of the problem of social homogenization makes the relationship between the two state functions of socialization and regulation particularly complex. The perverse effects of accumulation can work against the need for social integration.

In addition, one of the requirements for the success of any reform movement resides in the participation of those involved. Considering the external nature of the state, accentuated by the strengthening of false archaisms, reformism ran a great risk of reproducing the "Pygmalion syndrome" pinpointed by L. Carl Brown in another context, that of the Tunisia of Ahmed Bey: the

temptation for reformers of considering their society as a malleable object and trying to use their authority to give it traits in keeping with their own desires, at the risk of worsening the gap between those governing and those governed.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, the dilemmas of the revolution from the top resulted in a statist "totalism," the corollary of a state atrophy making the deficiency of legitimation manifest.

#### "Statist Totalism" and Atrophy of the State

To sum up the characteristics of the state emerging from independence, one could paraphrase Durkheim: "If the state is everywhere, it is nowhere."<sup>12</sup> The state has submerged the social unit in the name of the rationality of its purpose. This overdevelopment of the machine thereby signified the absence of a specifically delimited space endowed with its own rules and actors. Insofar as it was not separate from society, the state could not represent it. One with its machine and bureaucracy, it was external to those governed. Externality and overlapping found their expression in the complex party-state.

These features will be briefly shown by two phenomena: the nationalization of society and the return of the state to private interests.<sup>13</sup>

#### Nationalization of Society

In her essay on "National Disenchantment" Hele Beji writes that Destourian socialism of the 1960's heightened the split between those governing and those governed and "created that famous internal colonization, by giving the political apparatus an unlimited power of intervention."<sup>14</sup> In a later development, she maintains, concerning the split between those governing and the governed, that "the national leader, in the name of the people's values, has taken over the civilizational message of the colonist...."<sup>15</sup> These notations give an incisive formulation to the nationalization of society as a simultaneous manifestation of the externality of the state and its overlapping with society. More academically, one might say that the political-administrative elite dominating the complex party-state has in keeping with its purpose of homogenization, set about revolutionizing society, maximizing its control over individuals and groups, in keeping with methods that might stem from the Pygmalion syndrome.

The platform of the elite in power was made up of the objectives of modernization and secularization, with, as its principle of political socialization, "Tunisianness" (distinct from the Islamic Ummah and the Arab nation, on the one hand, and from specific solidarities, on the other hand). Looking to its implementation, the state asserted itself as the tutelary power from a triple standpoint. It launched a vast mobilization operation aimed at neutralizing intrasocietal cleavages that might stand in the way of political integration. It turned out to be a complex of "missionary institutions" of modernness,<sup>16</sup> proposing in particular, through the schools and health system, to disseminate new forms of behavior. Finally, it imposed itself as the institution for the accumulation of capital. These three modes of controlling society were closely intertwined. In this connection, state capitalism did not only



constitute the "economic aspect" of tutelage. Not only did it respond to the need to regulate the process of accumulation, but also used methods stemming from the requirements of political integration. For example, the plan turned out to be both a manifestation of control of economic activity as well as an instrument for mobilization and a missionary institution of modernness.<sup>17</sup>

During the golden age of the tutelary state, the 1960's, no social institution, whether religious, cultural, economic, corporative or trade union, escaped the direct control of the party-state. This "primacy of the political" erased any mediation between the private and public spheres, postulating the reduction of society to the dimensions of a receptacle for impulses emanating from the state. Consequently, the latter appeared to be "'separate' from its society and external to it, while being the main constituent element of social relationships, being 'the' social relationship."<sup>18</sup> One will agree that this state deserves more than any other the label of protector. But this hypertrophy of protection results, in the final analysis, in an atrophy of the state in the form of its return to private interests.

#### Return to Private Interests

The bureaucracy of the party-state experiences a contradiction that it cannot overcome. It internalizes the state model through the prism of its own perception of its elite status. It considers itself to be the exclusive depositary of the meaning of the state, in contrast with the mass of those governed, with whom it claims to share it. It is tied to a strengthening of the state by its monopolization, altering its purpose as it is implemented. In the end, it finally comes to identify itself with the state. Of this paradox, Hele Beji once again gives a particularly enlightening formulation when she writes: "Personal power itself ends up by no longer perceiving itself other than as a living symbol of the impersonal form of the state."<sup>19</sup> Let us add that the personalization of the state cannot be reduced in this instance to the "personalization of power." It derives its principle and effectiveness from a system of interpersonal relations which, behind the institutional facade, nourishes the party-state complex and extends its ramifications to society itself. It is a synonym for private management of the state, concretely expressed by neo-patrimonial practices.<sup>20</sup>

Those in power derive their principle of unity from the fact that they perceive themselves as the representatives of the general interest confronting the individual traits of society. Whence the institutional formalism, the constitutionality of the regime. But the nationalization of society cuts institutions off from their function of regulation. These institutions become stakes, positions of power that must be controlled, not constrictive rules of the game in themselves. This double tendency toward the devaluation of institutions, as rules of the game, and their increased appreciation, as stakes. is joined by the confrontation of factions having unstable shape and content. Protection of the principle of unity will be assured by the transfer of the symbolic potential of institutions to the person of the leader. The latter is an agent of fusion insofar as he arbitrates between the protagonists of a budding competition whose logic resides, for each one taken separately, in the expansion of

his personal influence and, for the whole, in the maintenance of a balance that excludes an excessively marked preponderance of one of the parties involved. At the same time, he turns out to be an agent of segmentation insofar as the expansion of the influence of each competitor depends on an increase in his prestige with the leader and in which the latter has everything to gain from seeing that no faction acquires too much importance. The system as it operates in the immediate entourage of the leader tends to reproduce itself in the entourage of those closest to him. Each one of them, taken separately, is placed at the head of interpersonal networks of support. He turns out to be a boss for individuals and groups whose positions of power depend on his own and the support they find with him.<sup>21</sup> This play of counterforces, which transcends that formally provided by the specialization of officially instituted structures and procedures, does not take place in a vacuum. It mediates conflicts and contradictions affecting society as a whole and reproducing themselves in the ruling elite. In other words, private management of the state somewhat channels the expression of intrasocietal splits whose mobilization postulates neutralization, although modernization favors its activation. Even if it denounces them and tries to annihilate them, the elite is invested by special interests of all kinds, including regionalism.

Illustrated by the phenomena of nationalization and return of the state to private interests, the atrophy of a state endowed with an overdeveloped apparatus explains its deficiency of legitimation and allows one to glimpse the latter's implications.

#### Deficiency of Legitimation and State Patronage

The contradictions of the new state tend to make the symbolism of the modern state inoperative from the standpoint of the establishment of a base of legitimation. The promoter of a new solidarity transcending special interests, the state activates and takes over false archaisms. The supposed representative of society, it presents the symptoms of a nondifferentiation and an externality incompatible with an effective implementation of the mechanisms of representation. It mediates conflicts based on conditions denying the social and political institutions any autonomy. The new state embodies a national affiliation, but does not give birth to a political community endowed with its own norms and symbols. The hiatus between its presuppositions and its characteristics poses the problem of its aptitude to turn into civic mindedness (good citizenship) the nationalistic aspirations it attracts and maintains.<sup>22</sup>

Recourse to other symbols, far from conferring on the state its own base of legitimation, emphasizes its absence. Here one mainly thinks of the diffusion by those in power of symbols aimed at transferring to the state the potential for identity and solidarity inherent in Islamic values. Whether it takes the simple form of "religious imagery" or more elaborate form of transposition and interpretation, such a practice assumes contradictory dimensions. In order to ensure its own base of legitimation, the state should, on the one hand, appropriate, in order to neutralize it, a field of solidarity transcending it and, on the other hand, activate it in order to enjoy the backing of its symbols.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the case, Islam cannot provide for the needs of

state legitimation. It cannot, observes Abdallah Laroui, "give birth to a religion 'of' the state." The same author shows how, in Arab and Islamic political thought, Islam and the state derive from two distinct orders. The latter may conform to the letter of the former. On the other hand, it is impossible for it to express its ethical ideals for this would presume its own decline. In this sense, Islam devalues the state: The latter turns out to be an organization of necessity and not the materialization of the idea.<sup>24</sup> The product of a history dominated by the gap between the ideal of the caliphate and the reality of "despotic" governments, this perception of the state obviously could not be interpreted as an immutable framework determining the future of the state phenomenon in Arab-Muslim societies. But, at least in a Sunnite Muslim country, it is clear that the increased value of the state can only come from the latter's internal dynamics. Islam can only sanction the justice of those in government (in keeping with the letter of the law) and not found a legitimacy. Furthermore, the atrophy of the state, whose use of Islamic symbols constitutes a confession, favors the withdrawal of those governed to a cultural framework, "nearly a belief," by virtue of which "the state has no moral justification."<sup>25</sup>

It would be hazardous, to say the least, to conclude that the new state resembles the old Beylic. Naturally, like the latter, it is marked by a certain distance between those governing and those governed. It would be easy to point up the mode of establishment by aggregation and the statist political culture of the elite in power in order to suggest some analogy with the caste of the Mamelukes. But however enthusiastically it might be completed, the exercise would be sterile, even confusing. In the past, the Beylik was analyzed as a state tolerated because it required little and posed little burden.<sup>26</sup> In contrast with this form of minimum state, the new state infiltrates the different areas of social life, maintaining a phenomenon of attraction-repulsion. Its intervention is feared insofar as it prolongs allogenic forms, those of an alienating modernness. But it is also expected in the sense that it would permit access to the material benefits of this same modernness. The diversified expectations that conferred its strength on the National Movement and that are polarized around the state, unable to give it a "moral justification," establish it as a practical necessity. Between the Beylic and the new state is all the distance that existed between an old saying of the Italian peasant culture quoted by J. Lapalombara: "*Piove. Governo-ladro!*" (It is raining. Government of thieves!) (It is the fault of the government!) and its subsequent transformation into: It is raining and the government should do something.

The ambivalence of the motives of those governed leads to a kind of state patronage: passive and remote allegiance to an external, higher authority which holds the instruments of coercion and regulation of means of material management of social life; loyalty finding its counterpart in the granting of services or gratification that might guarantee increased well-being, that *joie de vivre* (*Farhat al-hayat*) popularized by the slogan of the 1960's, or at least respond to the essential needs (the basic needs of Anglo-Saxon literature on development).

The state can therefore enjoy a strong base of support within the framework of passive citizenship, with backing for the political system centered around the mere products (output) of state activity. In other words, in order to ensure its stability, it is doomed to be effective. The notion refers to the exercise of its function of regulating the process of accumulation, to the impact of compensatory intervention, with with regard to the deficiencies of the market as well as the lack of legitimation. But it is uncertain, considering the fact that it poses the problems of the breadth of the margin of regulation and the limits of state patronage.

#### External Limitations

State interventionism is not determined by the mere position of the state with regard to society. One can undoubtedly maintain that it is linked to the inadequate integration of the domestic market, the dominance of an export sector mainly established, upon emergence from colonization, in agriculture and the mines and whose development blocks that of the rest of the economy. But this points up the combination of endogenous and exogenous factors: The lack of integration of the domestic market corresponds to a mode of integration into the "world system," which subordinates the national economy to the demands of the outside market (extraversion). The function of accumulation with which the state is invested proceeds both from its double status as the element in a totality (the world system), whose laws are imposed on it, and as a product of a social movement involving a readjustment in those laws. Following the example of other states situated on the periphery of the system, its "economic policy" will be "both the expression of an international division of labor to which it is subjected and the expression of an international division of labor it is trying to change."<sup>29</sup> The new state thus finds itself somewhat "cornered" between the requirement to reproduce a hegemonic system and that of its own hegemony over society. The problem of its margin of regulation is therefore that of the ways and means of a self-centered development. It takes on an "external" dimension with regard to the limitations of extraversion, but also an "internal" dimension based on the social dialectic underlying it. On state intervention depends the expansion of the bases of private capital and the wage earners, which in time leads to a crystallization of interests, renewing the factors of conflict and its mediation.

The state's ability to respond to expectations regarding it turns out to depend on the breadth of its margin of regulation. Assuming it succeeds in meeting essential needs with respect to nutrition, housing, health and education, one would next see the problem of rising expectations, the appearance of new needs in quantity and quality, likely to stretch to the breaking point the extractive and distributive capacities of the state, as determined by its margin of regulation. Whence the risk that "the claims (of those governed) to compensation based on the (politicoeconomic) system increase more rapidly than the mass of available values" or that expectations "will emerge that cannot be satisfied by compensation in accordance with the system."<sup>30</sup>

The future limits of state patronage do not only have to do with a possible gap between available resources and demand. They may also stem from the impact



of state interventionism on the system of values. The efficiency of the state may undermine the storehouse of traditions, promoting a remote allegiance, naturally, but passive as well (the conviction that the state "has no moral justification" expresses a skepticism that amounts to acceptance of the established order). It is therefore exposed to the danger of having its deficit exposed by the radical forms of negative citizenship, a phenomenon grasped by certain authors based on the concept of "indignation" in preference to that of "frustration."<sup>31</sup>

It is through these types of problems and responses given to them that the trajectory of the new state has shaped up, characterized by a relative disengagement.

#### State Regulation of Growth and Market Laws

What is commonly called the "1969 crisis" opened a period marked by a reorientation of state regulations in the direction of greater permeability to market laws and, at the same time, by a reduction in the margin of regulation by the state. It corresponded to a change in means of control of a semi-competitive market by the state, without challenging the very fact of state preponderance. One therefore does not know how to interpret it in terms of opposition between two ideal types: a planned economy and economic liberalism. Consequently, one cannot follow Gargouri when he asserts that "the crisis of 1969 basically constituted only a moment of regaining control."<sup>32</sup>

#### Change in Imperatives of Regulation

The crisis at the end of the 1960's found its detonator in the attempt to have cooperatives throughout agriculture and its expression in a wave of discontent affecting the most diverse social circles. But it would appear that its significance resided in a change in the imperatives of regulation. From that standpoint, one might speak of a crisis in regulation.

During the first decade, the state set about taking direct control of the basic economic sectors, stimulating and orienting private investment, reforming agrarian structures, controlling circuits of distribution and trade with other countries and strengthening educational and health systems, looking toward self-centered development. Placed under the sign of compromise, symbolized by the principle of "coexistence of the three sectors": private, state and cooperative, the planned economy policy resulted in increased weight of the economic and social forces expressing the laws of the market.

The massive recourse to foreign capital to finance a considerable investment effort rendered state action dependent upon foreign aid and, consequently, particularly sensitive to pressure. However, the latter affected the direction of a reorientation only insofar as the transformations and blockages inherent in the policy followed had assembled the conditions.

In the final analysis, the role of the state was summed up as a strengthening of the economic and social fabric, which could mobilize private capital. But it could not master the anticipated effect. In 1968, private enterprise

accounted for one-fourth of all investments, compared with some 10 percent during the 1962-1964 period (First Plan). Gross formation of fixed capital then suffered the counterblow of a slowdown in direct investment by the state and reduced foreign aid.<sup>33</sup> Whatever the case, despite increased relative importance, the private sector generally was hesitant to invest, to use the euphemism found in a World Bank report.<sup>34</sup> While the planner claimed to be concerned about "building the confidence of the private sector," the latter, except for certain branches including tourism, took a reserved attitude. The control sought by the state over all economic circuits became, as soon as it had created the initial conditions for a broadening of private capital, a particularly constrictive obstacle with respect to the logic of profit, especially since the expansion of cooperatives in agriculture maintained tensions favoring a wait-and-see attitude.

Furthermore, by investing in the economic and social infrastructure, the state renewed the elements of the employment problem in two ways. On the one hand, one must understand that priority given to long-term productive investments (51 percent of all investments during the 1962-1971 decade) did not help create jobs (130,000 jobs created during the decade, one-third in the government office branch). But this also means that social spending (education and health) contributed to an expansion and increased qualification of the available work force, given the fact that the size of the work force cannot be isolated from the impact of the rural exodus, which itself is accentuated by the failure of the cooperative movement.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the intensive mobilization of resources in infrastructure investments has been accompanied by a policy of wage freezes, which generates distortions and tension because of the gap between strict regulation, excluding any wage stipulation in the field of collective bargaining, and the real dynamics of remuneration.<sup>36</sup>

Financial dependency, expansion of the bases of private capital, employment factors and wage questions: All these elements bear witness to the fact that the state could no longer ensure the compatibility of regulation imperatives which, by its intervention, it had helped to renew.

#### Reorientation of State Regulations

The reorientation of state regulations came about through accelerated growth based on a new combination of the requirement to increase capital and the factors of the employment market, generating uneven development.

#### Accelerated Growth

On the eve of the Fourth Plan in 1973, the government set as its objective a doubling of the growth rate compared with the first decade, based on a triple volume of investments and a new distribution of those investments. It was a matter of directing two-thirds of the investments toward the directly productive sectors that create jobs. At the same time, the burden of investments had to make way for increased participation of private capital.

The results recorded, although not meeting the goals set, did in fact record the change in direction. From one decade to the next, the growth rate of the



GNP went in real terms from 4.6 to 7.3 percent, while the volume of investments quadrupled. The share of productive investments went from 51 to nearly 62 percent. As for the participation of private capital, both national and foreign, it did indeed progress, rising from 32 to 41 percent thanks to a legal arsenal of incentives (tax advantages, exemption from social costs): the law of 27 April 1972 creating a special system for enterprises producing for export: the law of 3 August 1974 on investments in the manufacturing industries.

From the standpoint of employment, the accelerated growth resulted in 400,000 new jobs (compared with 130,000 during the first decade), facing an additional demand for 500,000 new jobs. It also resulted in a modification of the structure of the active population actually occupied, mainly characterized by a relative decline in agriculture (35 percent in 1980 compared with 41 percent in 1966) and an expansion of the manufacturing industries (19 percent in 1980 compared with 9.5 percent in 1966).<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the accelerated growth permitted an overall improvement in the standard of living. The average annual rate of increase in income per person went from 1.3 percent during the first decade to 3.8 percent during the second. At constant prices, the average annual expense per person nearly doubled between 1966 and 1980 (from 130 to 248 dinars). At the same time, the structure of consumption experienced a marked evolution with a relative decline in the food column<sup>38</sup> and with new eating habits: Between 1970 and 1977, the consumption of meat, sugar, oil and egg products rose by 70, 40, 25 and 125 percent respectively.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, it goes without saying that Tunisia has not become a consumer society. For many Tunisians, it is but a "society of greed"<sup>40</sup> because of the unequal development inherent in the accelerated growth.

#### Uneven Growth

The perverse effects of the acceleration in growth are manifested in the very areas where its best performance is recorded: employment and the standard of living. In this connection, one can identify three main types of disparities, between classes of age, social categories and regions.

The acceleration in growth poses the problem of employment for the young. One must know that nearly 63 percent of the population was under 25 in 1980, meaning born after independence. The age groupings between 15 and 25 represented some 30 percent of the total population and 34 percent of the population of an active age. But by themselves, they constituted nearly 60 percent of the unemployed. Among the young men over 15 and under 25, 1 out of 4 is officially unemployed.<sup>41</sup>

A second gloomy aspect of growth has to do with inequality in the distribution of income. In 1980, nearly 30 percent of all Tunisians still lived under the so-called poverty level, compared, one must add, with 42 percent in 1971 and 73 percent in 1961.<sup>42</sup> One should also note that 50 percent of the mass of expenditures is attributable to the richest 21 percent of the population

(only 5 percent for the poorest 20 percent).<sup>43</sup> A document from the Ministry of Planning and Finance considered these figures "still too cruel to be accepted or tolerated."<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the acceleration in growth worsened imbalances in the country's geographic structure. As early as 1971, in its study on "The Cities of Tunisia," "Group Eight," a group of researchers, had called attention to the possible impact of a policy of promoting private investment of national and foreign origin. Given the propensity of private capital to invest at the lowest cost, it denounced the danger of worsening the polarization around Tunis and the coast. "Nothing major will happen in the interior and the essential activity in the economic field will be along the coast. One thus risks seeing the majority of public investments reflect the geography of private investments."<sup>45</sup> Ten years later, one has to take note of the truth of the prediction. "The observation we have to make, however cruel it may be," one could read in a preliminary document of the Sixth Plan, "is that the country is divided on the levels of infrastructure and development into two parts: the coastal region, which is endowed with an infrastructure largely superior to that of the national average and where economic activity is concentrated, whether it be industrial, commercial, administrative or touristic; and the regions of the west and the south, where the infrastructure is inadequate and where economic activity is reduced, with few exceptions, to agriculture and small business."<sup>46</sup>

Industrialization is essentially limited to the region of Tunis and the coast. Some 90 percent of the industrial jobs created between 1973 and 1979 within the framework of approved projects are in these areas.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, unemployment mainly strikes the regions of the interior and rural milieus.<sup>48</sup> It maintains a flow of internal migrations (rural exodus), which concentrates the additional demand for jobs on the coast and which inherently contains an aggravation of the imbalances from which it stems. In order to try to remedy these inequalities of development, also illustrated by the results of household consumer surveys,<sup>49</sup> the law of 3 August 1974 already mentioned was modified by that of 23 June 1981 concerning the promotion of investments in manufacturing industries and industrial decentralization. It is still too soon to be able to evaluate the scope of new incentives aimed at orienting investments to the deprived regions. Whatever the case, in order to counter the negative effects of growth, state intervention generally encounters the fact that the very dynamics of growth have accentuated extraversion and consequently reduced the margin of regulation.

#### Reduction in Margin of Regulation

The reorientation of state regulations does not only correspond to a new combination of the demand to increase capital and the elements of the job market. It also has to do with a third term, the intensification of foreign trade, which has brought about a reduction in the margin of regulation of the state.

A generic term, the laws of the market here refer to the more precise laws of "comparative costs" and "the proportion of factors." It is a question of ensuring growth by the promotion of exports of goods and services by making

the most of "comparative advantages" made up of a large reserve of labor at a relatively low cost and a whole set of ecological and political parameters favorable to the development of international tourism. This model<sup>50</sup> must not lead one to misunderstanding or simplification. It is gradually imposing itself in Tunisia with the help, not of a state decision, but of the attempt to adapt the imperatives of growth to those of the international division of labor. It fits into a trend that finds its impetus in the tensions of the market and not in a raw fact.

#### Opening to the Outside

During the second decade, the opening to the outside was not summed up in an intensification of exports, encouraged by the law of 27 April 1972 concerning the establishment of a special system for enterprises producing for export.<sup>51</sup> It went hand in hand with a development of the domestic market rising out of import substitutions promoted by the law of 3 August 1974 relative to investments in manufacturing industries.<sup>52</sup>

Between 1972 and 1981, exports of goods and services represented an average of 34 percent of the GNP, compared with 21 percent during the first decade. This increase was essentially due to hydrocarbons, tourism and the non-food manufacturing industries. The five-fold increase in ten years of tourist receipts -- in second place after petroleum products -- is in keeping with the logic of promoting exports, while the relative importance of tourism (17.7 percent of the total receipts from exports of goods and services) tends to emphasize the limitations of goods exports. In this connection, the proportion of oil products (44.7 percent of exports of goods, compared with 14.8 percent during the first decade) shows that the labor factor only partially affected the growth of exports. Of course, manufacturing industries contributed more than in the past to the structure of goods exports (31.9 percent compared with 21.6 percent during the first decade).<sup>53</sup> But in this instance, it is a question of chemistry (phosphate derivatives) and textiles. Only the latter covers the full export arrangement based on the law of "the proportion of factors." Except for textiles, the growth of manufacturing industries during the second decade (an average of 10 percent a year) had to do with the replacement of imports.

Along with the growth in exports, imports experienced strong growth. On the average, they represented 39 percent of the GNP, compared with 21 percent during the first decade. The phenomenon is attributable to the industrialization effort insofar as the latter gives rise to an increased demand for equipment, raw materials and energy products (corresponding imports rose by 21.9, 23.2 and 40.4 percent respectively, compared with 23.4 percent for all goods imports). In addition, it confirms the growth in consumption (8.2 percent, higher than that of the GNP: 7.1 percent) that must not be attributed solely to the development of the domestic market. Imports of food goods, particularly grain, have increased, it is true, but at a slower rate (17.3 percent) than that of other imported goods. As for imports of non-food consumer goods, they are not unrelated to the policy of promoting exports, with part of them corresponding to the processing activities of enterprises producing for export. Depending on whether or not one takes this factor into

account, the rate of growth of imports of non-food consumer goods varies from 27.6 to 22 percent.<sup>54</sup>

As the document introducing the Sixth Plan (1982-1986) likes to emphasize, imbalances in the opening to the outside were corrected financially by the favorable situation of the terms of trade, meaning the market, assured by the rising prices of oil products and phosphate.<sup>55</sup> Whence an extreme sensitivity to market fluctuations, likely to bestow a structural impact on a deterioration of the situation.

#### Limitations of the Opening

Initially, the opening to the outside provided broad freedom to maneuver due to relative prosperity. During that period, the first half of the 1970's, one observer noted: "All the records have been beaten," adding: "Exports, investments, new jobs are carried away by a veritable boom. Money is circulating like never before. Enterprises are prospering...."<sup>56</sup> In this context, one witnessed a controlled return to the free determination of wages, the latter being accompanied by the setting by order of an interoccupational guaranteed minimum wage (SMIG). At the same time, the government embarked upon a price support policy, instituting the General Compensation Fund, a special treasury fund designed to guarantee the purchasing power in spite of price fluctuations affecting a number of products (sugar, grains, oil, meat and so on). But as early as 1975, Tunisia would suffer the effects of the world crisis, with the price support policy no longer succeeding in protecting it against exogenous inflation factors. A second phase then began in which the logic of the opening to the outside offered no other response to the disturbances it caused than that of its own extension. The disturbances mainly affected the price-wage duo because of higher import prices and their implications with respect to production costs and the purchasing power.<sup>57</sup> Gradually, the free determination of wages gave way to stricter control, while inversely, the price support was softened by the disengagement of the Compensation Fund from certain products, as we shall see later. The response offered by the opening to the outside resides in increased promotion of exports, based on the employment-consumption opposition.

Spokesmen for the laws of the market -- selective laws because they postulate the regulation of wages -- maintain that the difficulties of the Tunisian economy at the end of the 1970's stems from a weakening of its "comparative advantage" through an increase in production costs attributable to the increased in the SMIG. The latter, along with the tariff policy and the stagnation of interest rates, allegedly played against the creation of jobs by causing a propensity to capitalistic investments and production methods using a heavy density of capital.<sup>58</sup>

Whatever the case, taking note of the drop in world oil prices and the decline in Tunisia's oil reserves, the Sixth Plan (1982-1986) is designed in terms of a double rebalancing: of monetary flow on behalf of savings, on the one hand, and the flow of goods and services on behalf of exports, on the other. It recommends a check on private consumption within limits compatible with those of the GNP in order to increase the volume of investments and thereby, the



number of jobs created with production being more oriented toward export. Considering the fact that the "exaggerated" orientation of the manufacturing industries toward the local market, assuring them of "comfortable protection," has nearly reached its limits, the planner comes out for an expansion of the opening to the outside as the *sine qua non* of the pursuit of industrialization "at an accelerated rate." From this standpoint, a new series of measures promoting exports was announced by the government in September 1983: a bill concerning the establishment of export companies (promotion and marketing of products on the foreign market), a bill relating to export insurance-credit, sales authorization in foreign exchange for products exempt from taxes, greater flexibility for manufacturers and importers.<sup>59</sup> These decisions, which confirm the hold of the export model, present a double characteristic: They derive their coherence from a system of limitations and intervene at a time when Tunisia's main economic partners, the EEC countries, facing the crisis, are inclined to put quotas on imports. This tells to what extent the state's margin of regulation is reduced by the "laws," those of the market, far removed from the principle of equality.

Given the impact of accelerated growth and the implications of the reduced margin of regulation, the problem of the congruency of the motivations of the governed and the needs and supply of the state is acutely posed.

#### Limits of Patronage and Relative Disengagement of the State

State patronage, a form of passive citizenship capable of providing the state with a base of support in keeping with its own needs and the motivations of those governed, has nearly reached its limits. In the context of the 1980's, it is possible to identify the symptoms of a negative citizenship. The phenomenon, sometimes evoked by official discourse in terms of a crisis of civic values or civic-mindedness, cannot be summed up in the statement that, in effect, "in the conscience of today's Tunisian, rights would occupy a more important place than duties and obligations."<sup>60</sup>

It is a fact that citizens tend to be more demanding. Such behavior is only negative insofar as it expresses an exacerbation of state patronage linked to a corporatization of society and an overburdening of the state. The citizen always demands more of a state that remains exterior to him and whose distributive capacity has become blunted. In other words, far from making up for the lack of legitimation, growth has made the mobilization of support more uncertain, bringing about a simultaneous rise in social expectations and a reduction in state supply. Growth has not only corporatized society. As a process of unequal development, it has also contributed to a societal bifurcation leading to the manifestation of radical forms of negative citizenship. The latter correspond less to disappointed expectations than to the fairly keen awareness that nothing more can be expected from the state. The belief that the state "has no moral justification" would give way here to the conviction of its immorality and the exacerbation of state patronage to "indignation," a kind of negation of the state.

The limits of state patronage outline an evolution of the state toward a relative disengagement characterized by a partial transfer from the social to

the market and the recognition of areas of freedom-autonomy, changes whose ability to respond to the problems posed by corporatization and the bifurcation of society remain uncertain.

#### Corporatization of Society and Overburdening of the State

Growth has contributed to a differentiation of interests, bestowing a new vigor on the structures called upon to represent them. The evolution of the UGTT and, to a lesser extent, of the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Crafts (UTICA) marks the emergence of "corporations as autonomous channels for the articulation of interests. Along with the differentiation in interests, industrialization, urbanization and the rise in the average standard of living have contributed to the dissemination and the interiorization of a private-type model: a tendency toward individualism and consumerism, sustained by movies and television. Whence the manifestation of new demands in quality and quantity, through which the thirst for equality and social distance are likewise affirmed. The appetite for luxuries and conspicuous consumption of a minority<sup>61</sup> and the struggle for subsistence of the deprived groups of the population constitute the extremes of a process of socialization of new needs that reproduces gaps and heightens the perception of them. It is by reference to the impact of the reproduction of gaps and not to the differentiation of interests or the densification of the private sphere viewed in themselves that one can speak of the corporatization of society. The manifestations of corporatization, in the particular context of extraversion and unequal development, evoke those of the "alternate corporatism" analyzed by Pierre Rosanvallon in his work of the providence-state: Social groups seek to conquer or defend "corporatively" that which cannot be conquered or defended on the whole.<sup>62</sup>

The trend toward corporatization largely stems from the social implications of extraverted growth. We have seen that the vigor of growth was increasingly assured by the comparative advantage residing in abundant, cheap labor. Within such a framework, wages merely appear as a cost that must be reduced, while products are mainly earmarked for export.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, management cannot include in its strategy workers' wages as an outlet, or wage earners the productivity of the enterprise. Their relations can give rise to strong tension, but they do not thereby reproduce the antagonism of the "two basic classes" of bourgeois society, the stakes of whose struggle, beyond the defense of immediate (corporate) interests, are the continuation of conquest of the hegemony over society.

A second split, which overlaps with the first, is likely to pit the respective interests of management and wage earners against the different segments of the peasantry, with the latent conflict residing in the level of farm prices.<sup>64</sup> Finally, a third line of cleavage brings about a demarcation between interests organized in "corporations," positively linked to the production and consumption circuits, and those, unorganized, that are negatively linked to those same circuits in the form of unemployment, intermittent work and underemployment. The product of extraversion, the marginalization of part of the population contributes to its broadened reproduction, while maintaining the labor reserve constituting a comparative advantage. From the time it is inserted into the



limits of the comparative advantage of the work factor, the process of increasing capital simultaneously plays in the direction of an absorption (investments in projects with intensive labor) and a reproduction (continuation of the comparative advantage) of marginalization. With respect to the situation of wage earners, marginalization means competition for jobs, while the creation of new jobs accentuates pressure on wages by postulating a check on private consumption.

It is true that vast breakdowns of the economy do not stem directly from the export model: sectors or branches of activity of a capitalistic nature or whose production is mainly oriented toward the domestic market. Nevertheless, they are not spared by the "corporatist" implications. Quite the contrary; the gradual, partial and unequal dissemination of the model points up the extent of a propensity toward corporatization, observable not only at the level of broad segments, but also within each one of them. The trait is particularly obvious with respect to wage earners. Major wage disparities separate public enterprises of an industrial and commercial nature, as well as certain services (banks and insurance), branches with a high intensity of labor. The former employ workers who, because of the specificity of their activities, greater productivity and strong trade union establishments, enjoy relatively advantageous wages. But the more the export sector expands, the more the advantages acquired in certain firms or branches are threatened. the export orientation postulating a reduction in private consumption and, therefore, of the entire wage mass. The phenomenon can only freeze the segmentation and encourage the tendency toward biased solutions.

These few considerations give only a glimpse of the trend toward corporatization. The latter, based on the imbalances in the geographic structure, is coupled with a rise in regionalism, which somewhat confuses the features. The sphere of corporatist interests is itself penetrated by regionalistic solidarities which, in the final analysis, may resemble corporations (pressure groups).

The corporatization of society apparently strengthens the state. No social grouping can claim to take over and represent the interests of the whole. The exercise of hegemony remains the province of the state, each one of whose "corporations" depends on it to protect its narrow self-interests. Private capital depends on the state to make profit, wage earners for their purchasing power, farmers for the level of their prices and the deprived for subsistence. Corporatization would thus tend to exacerbate state patronage, by overburdening with scarcely compatible demands a state whose distributive capacity is greatly reduced.

The most obvious dimension of the overburdening of the state is financial. One finds here the direct implications of the reduction in the margin of regulation. Feeling the hold of market laws ever more strongly, the state is by definition less and less equipped to compensate for its effects. In connection with its financial aspects, this loss of autonomy causes its effects to be felt even in the very operation of the state. The overburden not only has to do with the hiatus between the demands and the state of public finances, but also with the fact that the state is increasingly in private hands. The differentiation of interests has been accompanied by the lack of

differentiation of the politico-administrative elite. Organized interests find direct access to the state through a growing interpenetration of the corporations and of the "state corporation": bureaucracy. Consequently, the cohesion and coherence of the ruling group are directly exposed to the tensions inherent in the exacerbation of state patronage.<sup>65</sup>

The overlapping of the financial and more specifically political aspects of the overburdening of the state is illustrated by the most recent developments in price policies. Reference has already been made to the General Compensation Fund and its partial disengagement. The latter has long been the subject of a debate on the question of whether its interventions consisting of price supports truly reduced inequalities or, on the contrary, reproduced or even worsened them.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, it derived its coherence from an attempt to make compatible and satisfy different demands and requirements. That function is now brought into question by the financial surcharge it would represent. Between 1971 and 1983, expenses of the Fund went from 2.7 million dinars to some 183 million. Resources (special taxes on gas and other luxury products) did not rise at the same rate. In 1974 and 1975, the Fund had a deficit of 5.4 million dinars and 15 million dinars. In 1980, the deficit accumulated since 1976 amounted to 125 million. It was still 83 million at the time of the drafting of the 1983 budget,<sup>67</sup> despite a disengagement begun in 1981. The partial return to truth in pricing had previously spared grain and particularly bread, the basic food of the majority of the population, but also the symbol of the state's distributive capacity. The question of the price of bread (unchanged for years) in 1982 and 1983 polarized conflicts maintained within the leadership group because of the prospect of the succession of the chief of state. At least it pointed up the disagreement between the prime minister and the two top economic policy officials. Prime Minister Mzali and Minister of Planning and Finance Moalla were notoriously in disagreement over what conduct should be observed with respect to wages and prices. On a television program during which Moalla asserted the need to return to truth in pricing, the prime minister intervened directly to deny the possibility of increasing the price of bread. Subsequently, the minister nevertheless continued publicly to maintain that "keeping the price artificially low leads to economic disaster."<sup>68</sup> Although Moalla was "removed from office" on 18 June 1983, his position would win out. At the beginning of October, it was officially admitted that the price of bread would go up at the beginning of 1984. But at the same time, Minister of Economics Lasram turned in his resignation after pleading, it would appear, for a gradual increase in the price of bread, in opposition to the option chosen in favor of an abrupt increase.<sup>69</sup>

An illustration of the overburdening of the state, the official imminent increase in the price of bread (probably 100 percent) was matched by the announcement of measures making it possible for the poorest people to face the increase. Consequently, the bread affair points to an evolution characterized by a kind of splitting of the state and citizenry between the two poles of the market and assistance. Before taking up this point, one should look at the forms and manifestations of societal bifurcation leading to such an evolution.

## Societal Bifurcation and Negation of the State

The distinction between bifurcation and corporatization is purely analytical. Both have to do with the same process of social differentiation stimulated by growth and its implications for problems of collective identity and solidarity underlying the deficiency of the state. But they stem from different "cut." With corporatization, emphasis has been placed on that which, in the process of differentiation, promotes reliance on special interests and thus determines the instrumental limits of state patronage by a gap between social demands and state assets. In addition, the process of differentiation poses the problem of the integration of part of society. It has resulted in distortions that could become set in an opposition between two societies, one of which would no longer expect anything from the state. Whence the notion of bifurcation. Viewed in this way, the differentiation marks the "ethical" limits of state patronage, bringing about a gap between the motivations of part of those governed and state supply. While corporatization circumscribes a terrain favorable to demands and tension, bifurcation conceals potential for indignation and explosion. One has as its corollary an overburdening of the state, while the other may lead to a negation of the state, which would no longer be the subject of expectations, but of rejection.

Strictly speaking, the notion of bifurcation, taken from Sp P. Huntington, designates the cumulative effects of "cleavages expressed in groups clearly differentiated within a society" or "the predominance of a line of cleavage over all others."<sup>70</sup> In the case of Tunisian society, it is possible to identify several dualisms having to do with geographical disparities, difficulties of integrating young people and the cultural divorce expressed by the fundamentalist thrust. The latter confirm one another only partially at present, therefore not leading to a rigid polarization between two clearly differentiated groups. But the former two constitute a terrain favorable to manifestations of indignation that could be attracted by militant Islamism.

The accentuation of geographic disparities by growth has engendered an initial type of dualism. The division of the country, based on an official formulation already quoted, "into two parts with respect to infrastructure and the level of development": the coast and the regions of the west and the south, has revived regionalist splits and given them an explosive charge. Of course, regionalism has never ceased to be present as a social and political factor of prime importance, even when, during the 1960's, it was labeled as illegitimate by official political discourse. For example, the Sahelian and Sfax regionalisms cannot be separated from the conditions for the establishment of the framework of the new state, on the one hand, and from the new business bourgeoisie, on the other, given the impact of colonial capitalism on the old peculiarities of the village communities of the Sahel and the southern metropolis. During the 1969 crisis and the deepening of the imbalances in the socioeconomic structure, regionalism emerged from its hiding place, its foundations strengthened. It was not claimed and given legitimacy by the leadership elite, but turned out to be more than ever a "basis for the regrouping of alliances" within that elite.<sup>71</sup> One could say that by serving as a channel of expression for regionalism, the neopatrimonial practices of the leadership class -- the restoration of the state to private hands -- did

somewhat relieve its centrifugal tonality. But in April 1979, the Study Committee on Development of the Territory and Industrial Decentralization sounded the alarm: "...If the creation of employment should continue to be distributed regionally as has been the tendency in the past, we should very quickly reach a situation that might be labeled as explosive."<sup>72</sup> The committee, an official organ set up by order of the prime minister, looked to a time when the worsening of disparities at the expense of regions of the interior would not only give rise to a new thrust of regionalism, but would free it from any form of regulation. In fact, the feared explosion did occur in January 1980, with the attempted Gafsa coup. It will undoubtedly be objected that the abortive uprising was the work of a tiny minority with outside support.<sup>73</sup> But the relative ease with which a commando was able to enter the city of Gafsa and take control of it is more instructive than the operation itself. One has to observe the extreme passiveness of the population in a deprived region, which has always been reserved vis-a-vis the central government. In this instance, the passiveness stems less from an acceptance of the established order than from indifference to the state. At least, those in power made no mistake about it, if one is to judge by the immediate repressive steps taken and the reduction in the political-administrative framework of the territory and the breaking up of the southern governorates into new units (creation of governorates of Tozeur, Kebili and Tataouine).

A second type of dualism is revealed in the difficulties of integrating youth. The latter, as previously indicated, are related to the problem of work and are consequently linked to the preceding factors of bifurcation. Unemployment of the young does not spare the coastal area any more than the interior, the cities any more than the rural areas. Regional disparities and the liberation of the labor force in rural areas maintain the rural exodus and internal migrations toward the coastal cities and especially Greater Tunis, meaning wherever unemployment is socially and politically the most burdensome. The concentration of housing and the aggression of a way of life inaccessible to most encourage delinquency among young people without jobs or resources, along with rising violence and, in general, the spread of antisocial behavior, reported in the press daily. The social marginalization is nevertheless an eminently political fact. Whoever frequents the stadium stands or mass transportation can observe the directly political orientation of the verbal violence of acts of vandalism. Their authors are expressing, often explicitly, a radical criticism of the state. At the outset, the date of 26 January 1978 is in all memories, beginning with those of the men in government and the subproletariat of the Tunis belt, whose younger elements constituted most of the demonstrators and the victims. The watchword of general strike issued that day by the UGTT in order to protest attempts on its autonomy was the catalyst of a mass violence whose principal protagonists were, by virtue of their situation and motivations, outsiders to the trade union federation and the labor world.<sup>74</sup> If, as suggested by Albert Hirschman, a "revolutionary situation" stems from the "fact that the dissatisfaction of the have-nots and that of the haves converge,"<sup>75</sup> the events of 26 January bear witness to the non-revolutionary nature of the situation prevailing in Tunisia. Not only would it be out of place to consider all wage earners as "haves," but what is more, one could not see a convergence in the manifestation of a bifurcation.



The difficulties of integrating youth go beyond the framework of the certified unemployed. They also concern young people in school, as shown by the lycee disturbances in February-March 1981. Quite properly, the prime minister saw their cause in the inadequacies of the job-training situation. He also understood their political significance in announcing the exclusion of the Academic Youth, an emanation of the party, of the educational establishments. The press at the time talked of "religious and political" slogans at the time of the lycee demonstrations. The euphemism designates the Islamic orientation of a dissent emerging from the lack of faith in the system of training and employment,<sup>76</sup> a phenomenon that sketches a possible articulation with a third type of dualism.

Militant Islamism actually stems from a dualism all the heavier with implications because, found in the cultural field, it is likely to crystallize the manifestations of the other two. Clearly, the Islamic nature of Tunisian society offers no area for demarcation between two subsets. On the other hand, this is not so of the modes of perception and interiorization of Islam as a fundamental element of the collective identity. Islamism postulates an immersion of all social and political life in the religious, while the model propagated by the ruling elite and a large part of the intelligentsia relativizes the social and political scope of Islam in a secular perspective. This model is in no way set forth by speeches and writings only. It is at work in the process of modernization. But -- and this is a major handicap -- it does not find in the state the autonomous place of collective identification necessary for its accomplishment, while the negative effects of growth crucially update the problems of identity and solidarity. The vitality of the Islamic movement is on a par with this failing. The situation of the lack of legitimation of the state and the inequalities and traumatism of growth stimulate the force of attraction of a populist utopia which, in assigning the expression of the ethical ideal of Islam to a new state, captures indignation and confusion. This question is the subject of a specific study in this issue of MAGHREB-MACHREK and will therefore not be dwelt upon here. However, one might add that with respect to the state, the Islamist danger resides less in the constitution of a party than in the development of a social movement revealing the gestation of a countersociety, a society against the state that really exists.

Given this type of bifurcation, the government has set about decapitating and neutralizing the Islamic Tendency Movement, the main Islamic organization. The political and legal measures taken in this area<sup>77</sup> emphasize, if there were any need to do so, the relative nature of the evolution toward a state disengagement, inscribed within the limits of state patronage.

#### Relative Disengagement of the State

The trend shaping up at the beginning of the 1980's is definitely that of a relative disengagement of the state. It takes on a general scope in the sense that, a corollary of the differentiation of the interests and overburdening of the state, it affects the different areas of social life. But, a corollary of the bifurcation, it is accompanied by a sustained state interventionism in the direction of the less integrated categories and groups. Under these

conditions, the evolution toward a relative disengagement of the state would correspond to the outline of a mode of regulation of a dual society. The disengagement of the state derives its principle from a logic of private ownership postulating a new division of labor between the public and private sectors and a new compromise between those governing and the governed.

The beginning of a new sharing between the public and private sectors is only confirming the hold of the laws of the market on the social level. First of all, it is a question of a de-nationalization tending to make citizens bear the real cost of products, goods or services they enjoy and to lighten the pressure on government by that much. The hypothesis is explicitly set forth in the Sixth Plan, whose authors consider as an injustice the fact that "public transfers -- of an enormous and ever-increasing amount -- benefit everyone equally, whether or not one is employed, whether one be rich, not so rich or poor." In this instance, the plan more particularly refers to the intervention of the Compensation Fund and expenses for health and education.<sup>78</sup> Thus the orientation then recommended, bearing the mark of former Minister of Planning and Finance Moalla, received more than the start of application, if one is to judge by the check on spending of the Compensation Fund and also by the development of the private sector in a field such as health. With this case, one is in the presence of the second dimension of the modification of the administration of social matters, to wit, the transfer of public services to the private sector. This goes hand in hand with the denationalization. It consists of the search for an articulation between the need to increase capital, the limitations stemming from the overburdening of the state and the affirmation of new needs in quantity and quality. At least, that is what comes out of the example offered by the evolution of the health sector. There has always been in Tunisia a solvable demand for care given by private medicine and hospitalization in private clinics. But until the beginning of the 1970's, this affected only a minority. Since that time, a new perception of the field which not only increases the number of persons seeing doctors, but also brings patients from the most diverse social groups to go to private doctors and institutions, considered rightly or wrongly to give better care, compared with public medicine that is practically free. Actually, operations in private clinics are very often performed by surgeons also practicing in the public sector. But their services are more sought out in the framework of contractual relations than that of public service, with the concern for quality winning out over cost. Ignoring the matter of respect for the obligations of a full-time staff position by government doctors, partial private health care is encouraged, since the profitability of investments in the sector outstrip the difficulties of financing encountered by the state. The Sixth Plan has outlined a reform of health insurance depending upon increased financial participation by those insured, whose counterpart is freedom of choice (between the public and private sectors). Beyond the example of health and its special features, the trend toward private ownership of public services is shaping up ever more clearly. It is about to affect the sector of transportation. On 8 September 1983, the Council of Ministers came out in favor of "far-reaching reforms" aimed at adapting the transport sector to the "development needs of the country," authorizing the establishment of new transport companies by public collectives and private persons. Here again, the principle adopted is that of a lightening of the state's burden by

a transfer to the private sector. Given the fact that the profitability of investments will very likely require an increase in rates, users will be called upon to pay for services in terms of the production cost, with the supposed counterpart being the guarantee of better quality. One can expect that sooner or later, similar reforms will be recommended in other fields, in terms of the same requirements or limitations: increase in capital, overburdening of the state, increased demands of citizens. According to certain observers, the idea of private education, beyond the private schools already existing, would make headway although it is excluded for the time being by the government.<sup>79</sup>

The new division of labor between the public and private sectors because of the transfer of public services to private hands and the denationalization of financing social expenditures involves a third element: assistance. It is up to the state to take care of those left behind by growth, that whole portion of society whose situation has nothing to do with the rules of play of the market. With respect to the price of bread, we have seen that the check on the spending of the Compensation Fund would be accompanied by measures aimed at enabling the poor to face the shock of true prices. An international organization suggested the issuance of tickets to the poorest population groups. In the field of health, while private practice is spreading, one witnesses a revival of public medicine aimed at the most deprived people of the rural areas and shantytowns of the big urban centers, with the policy of basic health care. The state would therefore continue to compensate for the "politically intolerable" effects of the mechanisms of the market, but in a restrictive manner, intervening where the private sector, for reasons of profitability, would be lacking and helping only those citizens whose situation is on the threshold of poverty.

It goes without saying that this recapitalization of the social,<sup>80</sup> this return to regulation by the market, accompanied by a rehabilitation of assistance, is not peculiar to Tunisia. It is indissociable from the neoliberal canons that increasingly prevail, both on the periphery and at the center of the world system following different modes and having different implications. Here more than elsewhere, the question of wages appears as the unsurpassable limit of a regulation by the market. It requires state intervention all the more because the same laws that impose freedom and truth in pricing presume strict control of wages. A political affair par excellence that confronts the state and organized interests, it accounts for the reproduction of the phenomenon of overburdening.

Moreover, the organization of interests sheds light on another aspect of the logic of the transfer to private interests presiding over the relative disengagement of the state. The slow and sporadic evolution toward a partial transfer to the market is also that of a relaxation of the control exercised over individuals and groups. The densification of the private sphere has led to the establishment of spaces of freedom-autonomy through the channel of a struggle begun in the mid 1960's and strewn with political processes, exclusives and confrontations. It is not our task here to trace the advances and declines of a trajectory mainly marked by the renewal and autonomization of the UGTT, the creation of the Tunisian Human Rights Defense League in 1977,

the emergence of an independent press, exposed to seizures and bans and the lifting in 1981 of the ban on the Tunisian Communist Party. The legalization on 19 November 1983 of two other opposition parties: the Socialist Democratic Movement (MDS) and the Popular Unity Movement-Provisional Committee (called MUP-II) constitutes the most recent phase of a relative disengagement of the state by the modulated recognition of pluralism. The importance of the event and the changes it illustrates and carries further has quite rightly been emphasized by most Tunisian opinion groups. It seems to us to reside in the drafting of a new compromise between those in government and the governed, sanctioning the limits of state patronage and in keeping with the return to regulation by the market. The loyalty of those governed -- the potential base of support of those governing -- would henceforth find its counterpart, no longer principally in the granting of services and favors, but in the existence of guarantees permitting the organization and defense of differences in keeping with modes in accordance with a state of law. In a way, greater submission by the state to laws would compensate for its increased subordination to the laws of the market.

Undeniably, this change brings potential favorable to the emergence of a base of legitimation for the state and positive citizenship. But one cannot forget that the logic of private enterprise includes private management of the state. Far from putting an end to neopatrimonial practices, it reproduces them. The relative disengagement of the state engenders tensions whose mediation requires a mode of articulation between organized interests and the state. The treatment of a question as sticky as that of wages partially depends on the insertion of the leadership of representative organizations, of the "corporations," in the neopatrimonial game. Likewise, the legalization of parties such as the MDS and the MUP-II can, in a way, be interpreted as an expansion of the preserve of the leadership group, the prelude to a reshuffling of cards looking to the succession of the chief of state.

In addition, the evolution toward a relative disengagement of the state responds only partially to the problems posed by the corporatization and bifurcation of society. In attenuating the overburdening of the state, it is likely to encourage an intensive mobilization of resources for the purpose of promoting the creation of jobs, particularly in the most deprived regions. But the export orientation that underlies the policy of employment and that expresses the control of the laws of the market reproduces certain phenomena of overburdening, causing tensions to converge on the question of wages. Private administration of the state makes it possible to buffer the explosive charge somewhat. But it is an obstacle to an upgrading of the state, whose recognition of areas of freedom might constitute a beginning. The integration of youth and the trivialization, in a way, of militant Islamism partially result from a deepening of the "ethical" content of the state. This straddling of contradictory factors expresses the fact that at a time of opening and on the eve of the succession of leadership, the fragility of the establishment of the state remains more than ever a current issue.

30 November 1983



# FOOTNOTES

1. See, for example, Camau, Michel, Amrani, Fadila, and Ben Achour, Rafaa: "Controle Politique et Regulations Electorales en Tunisie." Tunis, CERP from the School of Law, Political Science and Economics, Aix-en-Provence, CRESM, Edisud, 1981.
2. Using the title of a series of texts brought together and commented upon by Mohamed Sayah: "Le Nouvel Etat," Vol. I, Tunis, Dar El Amal, 1982.
3. Concerning the legitimization-support distinction, inspiration was drawn from Graziano, Luigi: "La Crise d'un Regime Liberal-Democratique: l'Italie," REVUE FRANCAISE DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE, 27, (2), April 1977, p 277.
4. On "totalist" nationalism, see Hermassi, Elbaki: "Mouvement Ouvrier en Societe Coloniale: la Tunisie Entre Deux Guerres." Thesis, Paris, Sorbonne, 1966.
5. On this elite, see Montety, Henry de. "Vieilles Familles et Nouvelles Elites en Tunisie." CHEAM, "Documents sur l'Evolution du Monde Musulman " Fascicule No 3, 8 August 1940, pp 1-24.
6. On the ideas of a state and nation among the "Young Tunisians," see Brown, Leon Carl, in MICAUD, Charles, Ed. "Tunisia. The Politics of Modernization." New York, London, Praeger, 1964, pp 26-30.
7. Hermassi, Elbaki. "Mouvement Ouvrier en Societe Coloniale," op. cit., pp 171-180.
8. Cherif, Mohamed: "L'Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord Jusqu'a l'Independance du Maroc, de l'Algerie et de la Tunisie. Le Maghreb dans l'Histoire," in Cresm: "Introduction a l'Afrique du Nord Contemporaine." Paris, CNRS, 1975, p 44.
9. Debray, Regis. "Critique de la Raison Politique." Paris, Gallimard, 1981, p 456.
10. Kraiem, Mustapha: "Nationalisme et Syndicalisme en Tunisie 1918-1929," Tunis, UGTT, 1976; Hermassi, Elbaki, "Mouvement Ouvrier en Societe Coloniale," op. cit.; Montety, Henry de, "Vieilles Familles et Nouvelles Elites en Tunisie," op. cit.
11. On the "Pygmalion Syndrome," see Brown, Leon Carl: "The Tunisia of Ahmed Bey 1837-1855." Princeton, Studies on the Near East, 1974, pp 353-367.
12. The formula of Durkheim is here taken out of context, which was that of a definition of democracy. See Durkheim Emile: "Lecons de Sociologie," 2d ed., Paris, PUF, 1969, p 116.

13. The use of these two figures differs from that in Camau, Michel: "Caractere et Role du Constitutionnalisme dans les Etats Maghrebins." ANNUAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD, XVI, 1977, pp 401-407.
14. Beji, Hele: "Desenchantement National." Essay on decolonization, Paris, Maspero, 1982, p 66.
15. Ibid, p 33.
16. The notion of "missionary institutions" is taken from Colonna, Fanny: "Paysans et Encadreurs. A Propos des Transferts de Savoirs et de Modeles Entre Villes et Campagnes en Algerie," in "Systeme Urbain et Developpement au Maghreb." Tunis, Ceres Productions, 1980, pp 318-340.
17. One may wonder, along with M.-P. Nettl, whether ideological control is not one of the main effective functions of planning. See Nettl, J.-P: "Political Mobilization. A Sociological Analysis of Methods and Concepts." London, Faber and Faber, 1967, 23 and the following.
18. Leca, Jean, and Schemeil, Yves: "Clientelisme et Patrimonialisme dans le Monde Arabe," in INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, 1983.
19. Beji, Hele: "Desenchantement National," op. cit., p 68.
20. On "neopatrimonialism," see the study already quoted by Leca, Jean, and Schemeil, Yves.
21. This system is described in Camau, Michel, et al: "Controle Politique." op. cit., p 333. It corresponds to the scheme drawn up by Bill, James A. and Leiden, Carl, "In the Middle East. Politics and Power," Boston-London-Sydney-Toronto, Allyn and Bacon, 1974, p 107.
22. On citizenship in general, see Leca, Jean: "Questions sur la Citoyennete Aujourd'hui," in LES CAHIERS DE L'ANIMATION (38), pp 21-33.
23. See Camau, Michel: "Religion Politique et Religion d'Etat en Tunisie," in Gellner, Ernest, and Vatin, Jean-Claude, ed.: "Islam et Politique au Maghreb," Paris, CNRS, 1981, pp 224-225.
24. Laroui, Abdallah: "L'Etat dans le Monde Arabe Contemporain. Elements d'une Problematique," Louvain-la-Neuve, Centre de Recherches sur le Monde Arabe Contemporain, no date.
25. Ibid., p 28.
26. See, on this subject, Brown, Leon-Carl: "The Tunisia of Ahmed Bey," op.cit.
27. Lapalombara, Joseph: "Distribution: A Crisis of Resource Management" in Einder, Leonard, et al., "Crises and Sequences in Political Development," Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1971, pp 280-281.

Based on the terminology of J. Habermas, one can say that in the absence of "direction," individuals and groups expect "values." See Habermas, Jurgen, "Raison et Legitimite. Problemes de Legitimation dans le Capitalisme Avance," Paris, Payot, 1978.

28. On the world system, see, among others, Bergesen, Albert: "Un Paradigme Nouveau: Le Systeme-Monde," REVUE INTERNATIONALE DES SCIENCES SOCIALES, XXXIV, (1), 1982, pp 23-37.
29. Mathias, Gilberto, and Salama, Pierre: "L'Etat Surdeveloppe. Des Metropoles au Tiers-Monde," Paris, Maspero, 1983, p 37.
30. It is in these terms that J. Habermas (op. cit.: 105) defines the "crisis of legitimation" in the societies of advanced capitalism.
31. See Waterbury, John: "La Legitimation du Pouvoir au Maghreb: Tradition, Protestation et Repression." ANNUAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD (XVI), 1977, p 421.  
  
J. Waterbury quotes Peter Lupsha: "Being frustrated does not imply any relationship with other actors or norms learned, except for an agent or organization that blocks our expectations. Thus, while the concept of indignation immediately poses questions on legitimacy, on the 'rectitude' of actions, frustration is situated outside such normative comparisons."
32. Gargouri, Mondher: "Croissance Economique et Progres Social: A la Recherche d'un Nouvel Equilibre" in LE MONDE, 28 December 1983, pp 13-14.
33. See Ministry of Planning: "Series Statistiques Retrospectives 1961-1971," Tunis, April 1974.
34. IBRD-AID: "Entreprises Publiques Tunisiennes," Report No EMA 13, 16 July 1969, p 3.
35. On these aspects, see the comments of Kamelgarn, Daniel: "Tunisie (1970-1977), le Developpement d'un Capitalisme Dependant," in PEUPLES MEDITERRANEENS, (4), Jul-Sep 1978, p 115.
36. See on this subject Ecole Nationale d'Administration, "Les Remunerations dans la Fonction Publique Tunisienne," Vol 2, Tunis, CREA, 1981, pp 46-54.

37. Sources: Year 1980: Institut National de la Statistique. "Enquete Population-Emploi 1980." National Volume. Tunis, 1982. Year 1966: SEKLANI (Mahmoud). "La Population de la Tunisie." Paris, CIFRED, 1974.

The other figures relative to the accelerated growth were taken from: Ministry of Planning and Finance: "Evaluation Preliminaire des Resultats de la Deuxieme Decennie de Developpement." Tunis, June 1980.

38. 41.8% in 1980 compared to 50.3% in 1966. See Institut National de la Statistique. "Structure of Consumption." Tunis, 1981; and "La Consommation et Les Depenses des Menages en Tunisie 1965-68. Etudes et Enquetes de l'INS," No. 1, Dec 1970.
39. From a report from the World Bank in June 1980 on "Les Aspects Sociaux du Developpement en Tunisie."
40. On this subject see, CAMAU (M.) et al., "Controle Politique...", op.cit.: p 89.
41. Source: "Enquete Population-Emploi 1980," op.cit.
42. Source: Year 1980: Institut National de la Statistique. "Situation et Evolution de la Consommation des Menages en Tunisie. Resultats de l'Enquete Nationale sur la Consommation des Menages 1980," Tunis, March 1981.

It should be noted that in 1980, the consumer survey used as the "poverty level" the criteria of a personal expenditures per year of 60 dinars in rural areas and 120 dinars in communal areas, at 1980 prices. For our part, we used the old criterion of 50 dinars at 1961 prices, or 75 dinars in 1971, 87 dinars in 1975 and 120 dinars in 1980, whatever the milieu.



43. According to "Situation et Evolution de la Consommation des Menages en Tunisie," op. cit.
44. Ministry of Planning and Finance. "Note d'Orientation pour la 3e Decennie de Developpement et le VIe Plan," Tunis, November 1980, p 3.
45. "Groupe Huit," "Les Villes en Tunisie," Tunis, 1971, p 408.
46. "Note d'Orientation pour la 3e Decennie de Developpement," op. cit., III.
47. According to "Evaluation Preliminaire des Resultats de la Deuxieme Decennie," op. cit., p 108, and "Rapport du Comite de Reflexion sur l'Amenagement du Territoire et la Decentralisation Industrielle." Tunis, April 1979, p 19.
48. Male unemployment rate: In 1975, it was 13.4 percent for the country as a whole, 8.9 percent for the Tunis region, 10 percent for the coast and 19.5 percent for the interior (according to "Evaluation Preliminaire," op. cit., p 108).  
  
In 1980, it was 10 percent in urban areas and 14.1 percent in rural zones (according to "Enquete Population-Emploi 1980," op. cit., p 295).
49. See "Situation et Evolution de la Consommation des Menages en Tunisie," op. cit.
50. See L'Heriteau, Marie-France: "Endettement et Ajustement Structurel: La Nouvelle Canonniere," in TIERS-MONDE, XXIII, (91), July-September 1982, pp 517-548.
51. Some 300 enterprises have reportedly been set up within the framework of the law of April 1972. They resulted in the creation of some 30,000 jobs providing total wages of 40 million dinars (speech by minister of economics to the Chamber of Deputies during debate on the 1982 Budget; according to LE TEMPS, 27 December 1981, p 7).
52. On these two "logics, see Kamelgarn, D.: "Tunisie (1970-1977)," article already quoted, pp 138-141.
53. All figures taken from "Evaluation Preliminaire des Resultats de la Deuxieme Decennie," op. cit.
54. Ibid.
55. See "Republique Tunisienne. VIe Plan de Developpement Economique et Social (1982-1986)," Vol. I, Tunis, 1982, p 49.

56. Sereni, Jean Pierre: "Tunisie. La Chance de Monsieur Nouira," in JEUNE AFRIQUE, (720), 26 December 1974, pp 68-69.
57. On the price-wage tandem, see in this issue the contribution of H. Dimassi.
58. A position in this direction is expressed in the report, already quoted, of the World Bank on "Les Aspects Sociaux du Developpement en Tunisie."
59. Measures adopted by the Council of Ministers, 29 September 1983. See LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE, 30 September 1983, pp 1 and 4.
60. Gargouri, Mondher: "Croissance Economique et Progres Social," article already quoted.
61. One of the best illustrations of the behavior of this minority is supplied by a merciless cartoon strip: Fazaa, Tahar, and Triki, Slaheddine: "Les Arrivistes," Tunis, Parentheses Editions, 1983.
62. See Rosanvallon, Pierre: "Misere de l'Economie," Paris, Le Seuil, 1983, p 19. See by the same author "La Crise de l'Etat-Providance," Paris Le Seuil, 1981.
63. See on this subject the article already quoted by L'Heriteau, Marie-France: "Endettement et Ajustement Structurel."
64. See the contribution by H. Dimassi.
65. One might mention, for example, the interpenetration of the leadership group of the UGTT and that of the government. "Internal" conflicts in the UGTT, particularly intense at the end of 1983, are directly linked to those of the relatives of the leader. Habib Achour, president of the UGTT, maintains the best relations with the prime minister. But part of the Executive Bureau of the confederation (the seven who resigned) is bent upon an operation to split the trade union movement with the apparent support of other officials in the regime, which is not without one-upmanship: In resigning, the seven reproached H. Achour for not properly defending the workers' interests.
66. See in this connection El Manoubi, Khaled: "De la Caisse Generale de Compensation," LE TEMPS, 17 December 1977, p 2. On the Compensation Fund, see Helin, Jean-Claude: "La Caisse Generale de Compensation: Evolution et Avenir," REVUE TUNISIENNE DE DROIT, 1976 (1), pp 65 and the following.
- 67.
67. Sources: L'ACTION, 28 December 1981, 5; "Mansour Moalla, ou la Tentation de la Politique," JEUNE AFRIQUE (1147/1148), 5 January 1983; Gharbi, Samir, and Hoeltgen, Dominique: "Prix du Pain. Deux Poids Deux Mesures," JEUNE AFRIQUE ECONOMIE (25), 24 October 1983, pp 59-60.
68. See "Mansour Moalla ou la Tentation de la Politique," already quoted.

69. On the bread question, see: Gharbi, S., and Hoeltgen, D.: "Prix du Pain," already quoted; Bessis, Sophie, and Belhassen, Souhayr: "Tunisie. Mzali a-t-il Choisi la Rigueur?" in JEUNE AFRIQUE (1,190), 26 October 1983. pp 32-35; Mechri, Hedi: "La Caisse de Compensation. L'Enjeu: Le Pain," in LE MAGHREB (74), 22 October 1983, pp 13-16.
70. "(...) The cumulation of cleavages leading to a sharply differentiated groups within society or (...) the ascendancy in importance of one line of cleavage over all others." S. P. Huntington refers in this instance to bifurcation as a social factor at the root of single party systems. See Huntington, Samuel P.: "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems" in Huntington, S. P. and Moore, Clement Henry, Ed.: "Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society. The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems." New York, London, Basic Books Inc., 1970, II.
71. Zghal, Abdelkader: "La Reactivation de la Tradition dans une Societe Post Traditionnelle," in DAEDALUS, Winter 1975, pp 225-237.
72. Report already quoted above, Note 47.
73. On the events in Gafsa, see Laghmani, Slim: "Aspects Internationaux de l'Affaire de Gafsa." Memoire de DEA, Tunis, School of Law, Political Science and Economics, June 1981; Belaid, Sadok: "L'Operation de Gafsa de Janvier 1980 et ses Enseignements," in REVUE TUNISIENNE DE DROIT, II, 1979 ("Melanges A. Ben Salem"), pp 13-45.
74. Concerning the events of 26 January 1978, see the interpretation developed in Zamiti, Khalil: "Formes de Production Paysanne, Exode Rural et Champ Social de l'Action Syndicale en Tunisie." REVUE TUNISIENNE DES SCIENCES SOCIALES (65), 1981, pp 38-100 (especially 91-97).
75. Hirschman, Albert: "Bonheur Prive, Action Publique," Paris, Fayard. 1983, p 133.
76. On the lycee disturbances in February-March 1981, see Ben Dhiaf, Issa: "Chronique Politique Tunisie," in ANNUAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD (XX) 1981.
77. On the basis of prosecution for membership in an unrecognized association, defamation of the chief of state and the spreading of rumor, several leaders and members of the MTI were brought before the courts and sentenced in 1981 to prison sentences ranging from 11 years to 6 months.
78. See "VIe Plan," Vol. I, op. cit., pp 169-170.
79. See in this connection Ben Sedrine Sihem: "Privatiser l'Enseignement?" in LE MAGHREB (71), 1 October 1983, pp 16-17.
80. On the "recapitalization of the social sector," see Jobert, Bruno: "Le Social en Plan." Paris, "Economie et Humanisme," Les Editions Ouvrieres, 1981, p 157.

## Tunisian Society in the Islamist Mirror\*

Studies of dissident Islam are becoming more and more numerous for the most diverse reasons: an ideological vacuum, geostrategic considerations of the great powers, concern of Third World governments, without forgetting that "Islamic" literature is a windfall for publishers and excites the curiosity of many university professors. This literature, voluminous in nature, has certainly helped to shed light on the other Arab and Islamic world, generally concealed by the human sciences. It has shown that, along with the world of the modern elites and urban classes, a kind of reproduction in miniature of the European family, there was also the world of traditional and popular culture, that of the shaykhs and ayatollahs that had been thought to be doomed forever and that was coming back on the scene to take its revenge.

But basically, the vision one has of Islam has not yet fundamentally changed. Eastern approaches postulating a totalitarian or other Islam continue to be in vogue. For the scientist, the task is not made any easier when Islamists themselves behave according to these same assumptions and enjoy taking their dream for reality. Continuing to conceive of Islam as an essence that is by definition transhistoric is to prevent oneself from distinguishing between Islam and Islamism, from making a distinction between a religion and a process of ideologization of that religion.

### Islamic Tendency Movement (*Harakat-al-Ittijah al-Islami*) (MTI)

We have chosen the methodological option of concentrating our analysis less on what the Islamic Tendency Movement has in common with similar tendencies throughout the world than on what it contains specifically as a social movement mainly deriving its logic and development from the evolution of Tunisian society. As soon as one makes an analytical distinction between the origin of a movement, on the one hand, and its diffusion, on the other, the task of explanation only becomes more complex, paradoxically enough.\*\*

### Origin of Movement

In order to explain the origin of the MTI, one can invoke a reason so obvious that it is rarely taken into account or given sufficient weight. The fact is that of all the Arab countries, Tunisia is the only one where the modernist elite deliberately attacked "institutional" Islam and dismantled its infrastructure on behalf of a systematic reform of the social and cultural order. Zitouna University lost its autonomy, the *habous* [translation unknown] were abolished, a code of personnel status was promulgated and the traditional functions of the *Majlis-al-Shari'ah* (high court for application of Koranic law) were done away with. In a word, the entire ancient cultural system was turned upside down. This undertaking, encouraged by the decision of the political leadership and supported by most "modern" university graduates, was accompanied by a basically negative and depreciative attitude toward traditional Islam. The following is an example of the vision that one might have had at the time: "The gesture of President Bourguiba, drinking a glass of fruit juice in public during the Ramadan fast, or the violation of religious law by the legal ban on polygamy, seems to us to be more promising than



statements of intention on the socialist future of nationalizations of enterprises, if one is to accompany these measures, as we have recently seen in Algeria or Morocco, with a doubling of religious zeal: the arrest of persons guilty of having broken the fast, legal ban on alcohol, and so on. Is it for that reason, having to do with the secular tendencies of the Destour, that Tunisia can take credit for being the only one of the three countries (of the Maghreb) whose economic growth rate is not nil? We would be tempted to believe so."<sup>1</sup>

Is it also for that reason, among others, we would say, that at the beginning of 1970, a small group of men gathered around a journal, AL-MA'RIFAH (Knowledge), to talk of their "exile and the exile of their religion" (as they defined their purpose in the editorial in the first issue of the journal)? Definitely, but not exclusively either, for as it will be demonstrated throughout this study, Islamism (but also social malaise, the demands of the left and even the deviation) will be fed by the disenchantment that steadily grows in the face of difficulties encountered by the national purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Actually, it was probably the exhaustion of the national purpose, the dismantling of the cooperative system in the interior, the effect of the Arab defeat in the region in 1967 that helped the renewal of religious fervor that rose in the country. While, organizationally speaking, the people's religiousness remained amorphous and sporadic, this was not so of the MTL, which immediately set up a structure and whose members did not simply intend to ensure their own salvation, but change the world around them and change it in their own image. But if there is a core around which the driving ideas of neo-Islamism were articulated and to which the movement owes its leaders and social base of support (Ansar), it is definitely the system of education and the tension it has embodied for a century.

We know, in fact, how a cultural schism during colonial times separated the graduates of Zitouna from those with a modern education, setting off a series of political and social repercussions. We also know how the independent state put an end to dualism by placing the venerable institution under tutelage. And yet, at the first opportunity, the victim of social repression erupted on the scene. As told by Rached Ghannouchi, main founder of the movement:<sup>3</sup> "At the beginning of the 1970's, cultural life at the University-Great Mosque of Zitouna began to resume and lessons were given there, such as those of Shaykh Ahmed Ben Miled. A number of young people, including Shaykh Abdelfattah, gathered together there. At the same time also, I myself returned from the East, inspired by the ideas of religious reform that I had observed there. I had gone to Syria to study, because I belonged to that which remained of the Zitouna-type education. Zitouna graduates had no hope of getting into the university. Some were hired by the civil service and others had to find a place in the East. Once back in Tunis, I attended the seminars of Shaykh Ben Miled and from there we committed ourselves to the reformist movement (...). My work in secondary education provided me with contact with young people and my efforts were aimed at making them aware. Our work was concentrated on ideological awareness and essentially consisted of criticism of Western concepts dominating the minds of the young. (It was

a matter of) demonstrating the superiority of Islam over those concepts. For that purpose, we formed the first club (seminar, *halqah*) at the Sidi Youssef Mosque in Tunis in 1970. That club was addressed to the young people at the high school graduate level. We presented them with Western concepts, analyzed them and then gave them the Islamic alternative."

Immediately, one sees the distinctive features of the movement that fashioned its thinking and its logic. On the margin of the central institutions, the movement penetrated society by the traditional avenues and, imperceptibly, surprised the center itself. It put itself at the heart and intersection of cultural currents, as a missionary movement that seems itself as part and parcel of all options with respect to identity and development. All elements therefore exist for leading to politicization and confrontation.

But before retracing the phases, let us first of all see the makeup of the body of the movement, its members, their socioeconomic background, their vision of the world.

#### Socioeconomic Foundation of Movement

The Islamic movement is first and foremost a movement of educated youth and it is mainly the high school and university milieu that serves as a center of propagation and base of support. The median age of our population is around around 25. Among the founders of the movement, normally older, just as among the leaders tried after their arrest in June 1981, no less than 50 percent were under the age of 30. The body of Islamists is slightly younger than the "leftist" students. Singularly enough, it has in its ranks a small number of older men, generally Zitouna alumni, the sign of a continuity of generations and the mark of a certain social base.

One thus sees the youth of the movement, but an educated youth whom the school and university system has largely helped produce since independence. Our sampling has 80 percent students belonging to one of the three cycles of higher education. Among the leaders arrested, no less than 75 percent were high school and university teachers, with the remaining 25 percent mainly made up of low-level office workers and technicians.

The social base of the movement was therefore essentially made up of young people having had an education. The statistics are confirmed by qualitative factors such as those given by Slaheddine Al-Jourchi, former member of the movement and currently head of 15/21 (15th century of the Hegira, 21st century of the Christian era), a journal of progressive Islamists. "In the beginning, we wanted to reach all groups, all the people. But experience showed that it was young people, mainly educated young people, who responded the best to our ideas and our concerns. The idea spread in that milieu in an astonishing and unexpected fashion, so that university and high school students made up most of the movement."<sup>4</sup>

Rached El Ghannouchi, no less categorical, made a comparison between his movement and the other movements competing with it on the Arab scene. "The pan-nationalists," he says, "relied on the army to conquer society. The communists

looked to the trade unions and from there, through the working class that they would mobilize, intended to ensure their control over society." If, in this situation, the Shaykh notes, the Islamist movement could not concentrate its forces, deployed at all levels, the fact remains that "the movement at least assured itself of leadership of the students."<sup>5</sup>

From the very beginning, a set of characteristics of the movement deserves to be noted:

Its powerful attraction on rural society, especially in the towns, which served as major propagation points. "As soon as a teacher in a given lycee in the north or the south spoke to his students of joining Islam, the rural elements were the first to respond and spread the message in turn."<sup>6</sup>

The strong concentration of Islamists in the schools of sciences and their relative weakness in schools and institutions of letters in general.

The massive participation of women, a doubly paradoxical phenomenon, given the absence of female participation in the country's trade union life, on the one hand, and the "anti-feminist" reputation of the Islamic ideology, on the other.

It will suffice for the present to note that native soil, science and culture cannot simultaneously fight over the hearts of young people without this announcing inevitable changes. But in order better to measure the impact of a movement that has already marked the upcoming generation and upset the political and ideological map of the country, one must have a more precise idea of its regional, social and economic context.

If Tunisia remains the hub, the center for the articulation and convergence of motivating ideas, it does not supply the main body of troops. Some 29 percent of the sampling come from the capital, but 38 percent from the coastal regions (*al-Sawahil*) and 23 and 7 percent respectively from the South-Center and Northwest. All the crosschecking we have done confirms this geographic distribution of fundamentalism: strong concentration on the Mediterranean coasts and in Tunis; less in the South-Central regions; very weak in the Northwest.

And yet, arrests made of members obeyed another logic. Except for Tunis, as shown by Table 1, they affected the interior of the country more than the coastal regions. We see only one possible explanation for this "selective" repression: The South-Central regions have traditionally been associated, in the eyes of the forces of law and order, with the Youssef rebellion and have always been suspected of pan-Arabism.

A study widely published throughout the Arab world<sup>7</sup> describes the members of the groups of Islamic militants in Egypt as belonging to the middle class (middle and lower middle class). We then tried to establish the class affiliation of our militants based on the level of education of the father and his profession. Some 48 percent of the fathers were illiterate, 27 percent had an elementary education and 19 percent had been educated at Zitouna.

Table 1. Origin of the population surveyed and the population arrested: comparison by region.

	Origin of Population Surveyed	Origin of Borj Erroumi Prisoners
Tunis	30%	33%
Sahel-Sfax	39%	21%
South-Central	24%	44%
Northwest	7%	2%
	100%	100%

Some 21 percent of those surveyed were the sons of low-level employees, 46 percent the sons of urban or agricultural workers and 29 percent belonged to what one might call "hardship-case" families -- that is, families in which the father was deceased or an invalid or retired and just surviving. Consequently, there can be no possible doubt about the place of fundamentalism in the social structure: They are young people almost unanimously from the poorer population groups, the children of wage earners at best, and often from families with no income. Given the educational performance of the children, made possible by the democratization of education and the prospects of intergenerational mobility that were its corollary, the revolt of these sons of the people is initially surprising. But one's surprise is dissipated as soon as one becomes aware of the fact that, for the younger generation, there is no more mobility possible,<sup>8</sup> that education no longer guarantees the future. It would appear that young people are acutely aware that for them, henceforth, it is impossible to be part of the elite, whatever the level of educational accomplishment. By a kind of anticipated socialization, the new generation will therefore have perceived all the implications of the economic policy of "openness" followed by a state that has chosen to disengage itself from society. The unscrupulous go-getters have truly arrived. The enclave of the privileged in the public and private sectors is closing and the civil service, the only avenue opened to the new arrivals, is the poor cousin, from the standpoint of income, status and prestige.

Having no objective chance of identifying with those who are "in," the temptation is great for them to drop out, beginning with their parents, and to find both fitting and credible an ideology that speaks of the oppressed. It is interesting to note the attitude of the parents toward the militancy of their offspring. It is the young people emerging from the low-income strata that declare they have found understanding and support from their parents, with respect to their membership in the movement. The only examples of firm opposition come from office workers or civil servants, an opposition probably motivated by fear. Consequently, it is not wrong to assert that the movement echoes in a way the feelings of the oppressed (*al-Mustad'afin*) and of the neglected.

Nevertheless, Islamism does not intend to be the expression of special groups, for it sees itself as the complete *ummah* [community]. It is within a society not yet Islamic and which therefore engenders differences and class conflicts,



that the movement then takes the side of the oppressed, following the example of the Prophet, who preferred, it is said, the company of the bereft.

Having localized the socioeconomic base of the movement and the school and university milieu constituting its matrix, it is useful to have an idea of its intellectual configuration.

#### Intellectual Activity of the Movement: Lectures and Production

Whether it be a matter of book exhibitions, bookstores, kiosks, reading materials made available at the mosques or systems of archives carefully maintained by each group of the movement, everything proves that the Islamists are undeniably the most assiduous and most voracious Tunisian readers. Of course, the portion reserved for the purchase of religious books is appreciable. The religious shelves of the annual expositions of Arab books are regularly emptied as soon as the expositions open, but it would be totally erroneous to define the intellectual universe of the MTI by strictly religious preoccupations. Some 65 percent of those interviewed by us say they read Tunisian newspapers daily. There is a clear preference for AL-RA'Y (80 percent of our sampling), then AL-SABAH (56 percent) and AL-MUSTAQBAL (38 percent). (AL-RA'Y, a weekly founded in 1977 and published by Hassib Benammar, preaches political and economic liberalism; AL-SABAH, an Arabic-language daily, founded in 1953, published by Habib Cheikh Rouhou; AL-MUSTAQBAL, an organ of the Socialist Democratic Movement.)

In all cases (and a few others, such as JEUNE AFRIQUE, 35 percent of all readers), it is a press that tries to give an independent view of Tunisia. If one reads LE MONDE, it is, we found, insofar as that newspaper is perceived, in spite of everything, as the newspaper of the intellectual and political elite. Actually, what comes immediately after the local press is the reading of the dailies and magazines from the Middle East. Most of the intermediate-level cadres of the MTI regularly read journals such as AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI (Beirut), DIRASAT 'ARABIYAH (Beirut), thus manifesting their interest in the Arab world and for the vision which the pan-nationalists and Marxists have of it.

Table 2. Frequency of Reading Newspapers and Periodicals

<u>Local Newspapers and Periodicals</u>		<u>Foreign Newspapers and Periodicals</u>	
AL-RA'Y	88%	LE MONDE	20%
AL-SABAH	56%	AL-MAJALLAH	15%
AL-MUSTAQBAL	38%	AL-UMMAH	10%
JEUNE AFRIQUE	35%	AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI	10%
AL-TARIQ AL-JADID	27%	AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI	8%
AL-MAGHRIB	19%	DIRASAT 'ARAB*YAH	8%
AL-SHA'B	17%	AL-SHAHID	8%
LE TEMPS	17%		
AL-WAHDAH 15/21	17%		
15/21	15%		
LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE	13%		

For these readers, membership in the MTI does signify a choice, a desire to show their distance from prevailing values. And yet, they are far from finding a body of definitive responses to precise problems. Since Marxism and pan-nationalism share with Islamism the criticism of the national state -- even if everything else separates them -- these doctrines in their eyes retain an interest and necessary reference value.

Having suspended any support of the existing order and challenged both official interpretations and common sense, whose manifest or latent function is to support it, these young graduates embark upon a permanent, obsessive quest for a different interpretation and reality: "the Alternative."

Among the authors most frequently read and quoted, we find Baqir al-Sadr, Sayyid Qutb and 'Ali Shar'ati. For students seeking an ideological leadership, Baqir al-Sadr and Shari'ati indicate the position to adopt with regard to the major currents of contemporary thought, while Sayyid Qutb opens the way to a dissident vein well certified in the history of Islam, made up of strictness, integrity and rebellion against any power not Islamic strictly speaking.<sup>9</sup> By themselves, they practically sum up militant Islam, whose theoretical foundations they established. It was for having borne witness to it that they were all three murdered. Without minimizing the symbolic value of their martyrdom, the fact nevertheless remains that their contribution is mainly ideological. What is asked of them are arguments, weapons for criticism, intellectual tools. But the militants also manifest another kind of need: that of seasoned guides capable of embodying the new values of Islamism and of applying them in suitable situations.

Table 3. Frequency of Reading of Islamic Works

Koran	73%
Baqir al-Sadr	54%
Sayyid Qutb	35%
'Ali Shari'ati	31%
Rached El-Ghannouchi	19%
Munir Shafiq	17%
Hasan Hanafi	13%
'Imad-al-Din	
Muhammad Qutb	9%
Hasan al-Turabi	8%
Mawdudi	6%
Hasan al-Banna	4%

While the first group offers Islam as a universal ideology capable of withstanding competition with Marxism and liberalism the second group embodies Islamism in its specific and national version, particularly Rached El-Ghannouchi and Hasan al-Turabi, who are less creators of theory than founders of movements, which they were, in Tunisia and Sudan respectively. Our analysis of the Correspondences<sup>10</sup> brought out an "axis of militancy" totally distinct from the "axis of ideological elaboration." It goes without saying that the names of these great organizers and strategists are invariably associated with that of Khomeyni. Some 85 percent of our sampling quote R. El Ghannouchi as the most respected personality.

At the same time, one should add that the Islamic movement is remarkable in terms of the quantity of its ideological production in the form of journals, books, manifestos and correspondence with newspapers. While it is difficult to make a complete inventory, it is undeniable that it surpasses anything ever produced by any opposition movement in the country.

Thus, the typical member of the Islamic Movement can be described as a young man over 20 years old, born in one of the country's towns, from the lower classes and having received a high level of education without his rising mobility causing him to repudiate his origins. Unlike the generations of the 1950's and 1960's, which placed their stake on the state, either via the establishment or through the opposition, the young Islamist began to seek individual and collective welfare outside the state. One cannot account for this evolution or measure its impact on society and conjecture about its effects without studying the ideological and political gestation of the movement itself.

#### From Preaching to Politicization

Al-Ittijah al-Islami does derive part of its strength from its nature as a movement. It does not in fact constitute, despite its underground and decentralized networks, an organization strictly speaking. It gains its power from the use of the spoken word, from the all-encompassing activism and the extreme dedication of its members.

#### First Preaching

We saw the flowering of the first clubs (*halqah*) in the capital mosques in 1970. No one imagined at the time that this core would become a parallel society with its laws and rules, or that it would give birth to a mass political movement. The fact is that in the beginning, nothing distinguished the MTI from other moral and spiritual reform movements. *Masajid* (prayer places) were demanded at places of work or at the university. The request was ambiguous and hostile vis-a-vis a secular-type regime, but it could be easily met.

In 1971, the group even joined the new Association To Preserve the Koran, a "respectable," legal organization, which enabled it to expand its sphere of influence through lectures, debates and Islamic readings, on the one hand, and to penetrate the local cells of the Association on the occasion of the election of leaders, on the other. But following an article published by LE MONDE, according to which the fundamentalists had taken over the reins of the Association, which they used against the government, the group was driven from the Association by the Destourian Socialist Party and it then had to return to the mosques. But the situation had changed substantially. The young people, who had had the opportunity to hear the word, took it to the university, where they faced a previously dominant "left," and the graduates of the university spread the idea throughout all the lycees in the territory. The idea spread, but the Islamists could now only rely on their own resources. Placed outside the legal institutional framework, they began to "think organization." They were not interested in joining the "establishment," it must be emphasized. Shaykh Mestaoui, graduate of Zitouna and a member of the

Central Committee of the Destourian Socialist Party, had proposed that they come into the party and change it from the inside. "We must not, as Muslims, leave it up to the ruling party to govern the country as it sees fit," they told him. "We must join the party, dominate its cells and the Central Committee and become an influential force inside the party." It was not a time for political dealings, but rather, for reflection and the establishment of a movement sure of its own identity and firm about its orientation. There was a clear determination to break with the mores and practices of a society considered as basically depraved. This will for dissociation was expressed by the increasingly frequent use of the scarf (*hijab*)<sup>11</sup> and a strict code of behavior that they wanted to apply to everyone: a puritanical reaction to the lifestyle deemed to be ostentatious and tainted with corruption, taken up by the new leisure class engendered by the policy of openness of the 1970's. The ideological discourse itself remained a basically idealistic discourse without any connection with reality. The decadence and backwardness of society was condemned. They wanted to show that the West was in the grip of its own crises and that it was therefore incapable of offering solutions. The major themes of the movement for a whole decade remained identical to those that had fed Islamic fundamentalism since the apparition of the Muslim Brotherhoods in Egypt in the 1930's, to wit: The political leaders are alienated from Islam, which is the reason for the crisis. Only a return to Islam would make it possible to emerge from the crisis. The world and the so-called "Islamic" societies remain societies of "ignorance" (*jahiliyah*) as long as they are not governed by the *hakimiyah*, that is, exclusive divine sovereignty.

Did anyone then understand to what extent this last "Qutbist" position was subversive and did anyone know that it would lead to rebellion against a government claiming to be Muslim? That seems unlikely to us. If anyone realized it, the Movement would already have changed approaches. Whatever the case, it then developed a distinct, puritanical and egalitarian counter-culture and simultaneously tried to gain new spaces in the civil society, of which the university is the most spectacular example.

#### Change in Discourse

The redeployment of the movement in the direction of the civil society was accompanied by extreme politicization. It became an openly political and basically revolutionary movement. We can present a number of signs of that change.

The first is given to us by an analysis of the contents of the journal AL-MA'RIFAH between the time it was first published again in 1972 and its suspension by the government in 1979. The matters dealt with by the journal have been placed in four categories: 1) doctrinal and moral; 2) intellectual and cultural; 3) social issues and 4) directly political subjects.

Judging by overall volume, debates over ideas, culture and dogma were the main concern of the journal. Social and political questions were less frequently treated.

This confirms our hypothesis on the reformist nature of the movement in the beginning. But in order to have an idea of its evolution, a little more



Table 4. Issues Treated in AL-MA'RIFAH 1972-1979

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Intellectual and cultural	299	53.5
Doctrinal and moral	177	31.7
Social issues	51	9.1
Political matters	31	5.5
	<hr/> 588	<hr/> 100

refined measure was needed, based on a comparison between the questions dealt with during the early years of publication of the journal and those handled during the last year.

Table 5. Issues Discussed in AL-MA'RIFAH 1972-1973 and 1979

<u>Topic</u>	<u>1972-1973</u>			
	<u>No. Articles</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No. Articles</u>	<u>%</u>
Intellectual and cultural	75	43.1	92	62.6
Doctrinal and moral	77	44.3	27	18.3
Social issues	18	10.3	9	6.1
Political matters	4	2.3	19	13
	<hr/> 174	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 147	<hr/> 100

This table illustrates the drop in interest in matters of Islamic dogma (from 44.3 to 18.3 percent) and the growing interest in political problems (from 2.3 to 13 percent). If, on the other hand, social questions remain marginal, the focus of intellectual concerns is dominant. As one will see, this intellectual focus often includes issues dealing with the life of the organization and its relations with society around it so that it expresses in a way the increasingly political nature of the movement. This nature will become manifest and almost exclusive in the journals AL-MUJTAMA' and AL-HABIB, which would appear respectively at the end of 1979 and in July 1979-July 1980.

Another comparative analysis of content dealing with the (religious) lessons given by Rached El Ghannouchi in June-July 1980 and March-April 1981 illustrate the hypothesis of the politicization.

Table 6. Topics of the Lessons of R. El-Ghannouchi

	<u>June-July 1980</u>		<u>March-April 1981</u>	
	<u>No. Topics</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No. Topics</u>	<u>%</u>
Ideology: Life of organization	24	58.5	10	26.3
Foreign pol. info.; Muslim Brothers in the world	10	24.3	5	13.1

(Table 6, cont.)

Criticism of political and legal options of the government	7	17	23	60.5
Total	41	100	38	100

#### Factors of Politicization

At the root of the politicization of the movement and consequently, its vast diffusion, to the point that it has emerged over the past three years as one of the major trends on the political, social and cultural scene of the country, there is a whole set of factors, only the main ones of which we shall mention: the intensification of the national crisis engendered by the open-door policy; the bloody confrontation between the government and the trade union confederation in January 1978, without forgetting, naturally, the effect of the Iranian revolution.

Between the 1960's and the 1970's, Tunisia went from an authoritarian socialism to a liberalism opening the door wide to local private enterprise and foreign capital. This policy of "get rich" recorded a high growth rate, especially in sectors such as the export industry and tourism. But its social and political cost was very heavy.

The economic "boom" first of all upset the social structure and accentuated class disparities. In the beginning, the government of Hedi Nouira intended to base Tunisia's development on the wake of international capital (contrary to his predecessor, who favored self-centered development). It then felt the need to encourage the creation of a class of entrepreneurs capable of standing up to and serving as a partner to international capital. Very substantial means (favorable financial terms, legal provisions, diverse administrative measures) were offered to all those who discovered they had a vocation for business. While a few dynamic personalities did in fact emerge, the most visible phenomenon was the rapid accumulation of wealth more linked to access to credit, monopolistic practices and speculation than to the capacity to innovate and start business ventures. In contrast, wage increases were slow, relative and out of all proportion to the income of corporate executives. While, from 1970 to 1980, the national income rose by 205 percent, gross nominal wages rose only 168 percent. In other terms, the share of wages in the national income actually dropped from 51 to 45 percent.

Without speaking of the classes made up of what we have called hardship case families, it is the middle classes in particular in the civil service (the outlet for most young graduates) that have benefited the least from the return of the economy to private interests. The middle classes have traditionally made up the backbone of the national movement. For a long time they were the basis of the regime. Today, whether it be a question of their objective experience or the future as their children anticipate it -- and that, from the time they are in high school, not to speak of the university -- it is the feeling of downward mobility and of a blocked future that tends to predominate. Consequently, the long expected growth will therefore have been beneficial only

for those who have succeeded in "jumping a step."<sup>12</sup> The indignation roused by this observation is strengthened by the increase in the number of school failures (34 percent of the young fail in the primary grades), unemployment emigration, regional disparities and the deterioration in living conditions in general.

Inequalities are less and less tolerated as Tunisian society becomes a mass society within which only a minority becomes part of the consumer society. The Tunisian Government has been too successful with its integration of the population, an integration that has touched, the minds, morals, structure and taste, in order to allow any dualistic development. Since the government has never truly explained why it has changed directions toward liberalism, since official explanations have never been convincing and since, in addition, the impact of the new policy on the social fabric has become publicly visible, what we are witnessing is something like the breaking of an implicit contract between the government and the population (it goes without saying that the role of the official media undoubtedly has something to do with this break in the dialogue).

To be specific, we shall speak of a crisis in authority affecting the political, economic and cultural order. Among the young people and students in particular, politicians are no longer perceived as public servants. The general impression is that of men who live off of politics and not for the sake of politics. Defiance is obviously spreading to the economic universe, considered as a world driven by the unscrupulously ambitious and profitseekers, whose enrichment is more than suspect. Even in the field of education, instruction and the teachers have lost credit and relations are perceived at best as utilitarian, if not marked by defiance and violence.

This general crisis of authority has not only engendered delinquency and all kinds of deviations awaiting their sociologists, but has also nourished the Islamic movement, more sensitive than any other to the deterioration in mores and the moral health of the community. For young people experiencing a crisis of values and a blockage of their objective future, it is no longer only the state, but an entire society that has become a society of ignorance.

The idea gradually emerges that it is no longer this society that rejects its own, but the young who are rejecting it.<sup>13</sup> The pressure brought by the student element on the Islamist trend and its shift toward radicalization are therefore on a par with the objective and subjective problems which Tunisian youth was experiencing and continues to experience.

In addition, since the economic policy has led to a violent confrontation between the trade union (UGTT) and the government in January 1978, this crisis has paradoxically extended to the Islamists, forcing them to a politicization that some of them perhaps view as premature. The Islamists first of all tended to neglect social problems and to show interest only in moral and religious questions. In the beginning, the journal AL-MA'RIFAH even spoke of the events of January 1978 as an "artificial agitation" and a pretext that some used to "destroy, burn and wage aggression." But little by little, the militants began to realize the fact that Islam was absent from the real social issues and that

a distance (*ghurbah*) separated them from the concerns of the lower-income classes. The self-criticism of the "guide" gave the signal of the new orientation: "Islamists have no influence on the working class. They leave that strategic sector to the rightist or leftist ideologies that have shown themselves capable of expressing its problems and taking up its defense. The weakness of the Islamists stems from the fact that they are not aware that the problems of that sector are of a social nature rather than doctrinal and moral. What effect can they have when they are content to repeat the slogans of social justice without defining the content of those slogans? It was natural for the workers milieu not to respond to their appeal because they pose problems that are not theirs. Societies and their problems have definitely changed, but they (the Islamists) do not change. It is as if they were calling on the people from far away."<sup>14</sup> The appeal to deep-rootedness and realism, the will to stick more closely to the needs of the lower-income classes and their demands, was made under the banner of modesty and the crisis of conscience, so unfounded was the Islamist message in its initial form vis-a-vis social reality.

The Iranian revolution subsequently stimulated the ambition of the group, now almost arrogant, and sharpened its appetite for power. The temptation of total power, actually always latent in modern Islamism, had finally come to be and the utopia was becoming not only conceivable, but possible. The Iranian revolution therefore affected the MTI, just as it shook the Arab and Islamic world and the world as a whole. A veritable change came about, both on the conceptual level and the verbal symbolic level. The Islam whose essence was a-historic was succeeded by the Islam-Revolution. The defense of a marginalized elite culture gave way to a populist, total Islam serving the deprived (*al-Mustad-'afin*), with a strongly social and anti-imperialist tenor. Actually, the politicization of the MTI was not separable from the politicization of Tunisian society, for the constellation of endogenous and exogenous factors that we evoked was general in its effects. One can then see the number of readers of the Islamic press increase substantially: Circulation of AL-MA'RIFAH, which scarcely exceeded 6,000 in 1971, went to 25,000 before its ban in 1979. Young people joined the movement in greater numbers. Thus, going solely by our sampling, 71 percent of the members reportedly joined the MTI between 1976 and 1980. Among these young people, 88 percent are from the Sahelian region and 66 percent from the southern and central regions.

#### Ideology of the Movement

To complete this study of the transformation of a near sect into a political movement, one must still present the MTI in its theoretical texture, after first sketching the context. We have deliberately avoided laying out the ideological texts of the type of those of the Muslim Brothers, and this for at least two reasons: first of all, because the literature of the genre is rather uniform, constituting the common source and common places of a trans-state movement; next, because it was sufficiently exposed to presume it known.

In addition, we have been careful not to adopt a rather widespread method of interpretation that would tend to view the MTI as the emanation of an



a-historic essence, of a timeless Islam that is manifested here and there and which, after a long rest, would find prophets to announce its return.<sup>15</sup> Our objective was to make a sociology of what we consider as a social movement, a movement that is intelligible only as a reaction to a changing society. The MTI proceeds from transformations of Tunisian society as soon as it seeks to bend and exploit those transformations (it goes without saying that any foreign interference, whether real or imaginary, is therefore reduced to a totally secondary rank).

Having thus situated the context, we now present a text from "maturity," a text that reflects the conception of the movement as it became, at the peak of its politicization. It was published in September 1980 by Shaykh Rached El Ghannouchi, under the title: "Westernization and the Inexorable Dictatorship."<sup>16</sup>

The study begins with the wornout theme according to which most political systems in the Arab and Islamic world are inspired by the Western model in its capitalist or socialist forms. As Baqir al-Sadr said, they take the West for the imam, whether it be a question of culture, administration, lifestyle or economic progress: "Proposed modernizations of this type are doomed to fail, on the one hand, because the ruling elite is not culturally rooted. It has a superficial view of the West, which it perceives, not in its cultural and civilizational dimensions, but as a military and political phenomenon. Furthermore, it knows only the Islam of decadence, an emotional or dogmatic Islam incapable of engendering an adequate model of development. The elite is not socially rooted either, insofar as its plans are but superstructural models incapable of motivating and uniting the masses. The masses therefore remained linked to Islam and its social and historic forms. They lost the enthusiasm that motivated them during the anticolonial struggle. A feeling of bitterness, despair and alienation seized them, for they find themselves in a social milieu in which everything is foreign to them: arts, letters, architecture, administrative organization and even the language and costumes sometimes. It was therefore natural for all plans of renaissance in the Muslim world to be doomed to failure. Proof is that no Muslim country is among the developed countries. How can such programs avoid failure when they ignore the culture of the masses and are (even) often hostile to them? This, pushing the masses into despair or apathy, futility and immediate satisfaction, makes them open to any apostle of revolt."

What then remains to be done by the "Westernized ruling elite," an elite which has denied its original culture and finds itself isolated, in order to maintain its privileges, other than to "also deny its Western culture (which) makes freedom sacred? The minority elite, which knows it is cut off from the masses, from their culture and their interests," therefore has nothing left but repression in its military, police and militia forms. It would therefore be structurally led: 1) to suspend public freedoms and erect a repressive regime in order to protect itself; 2) to create a new class that enjoys special privileges sealing its alliance with the existing regime: "They are islands of hedonism in the middle of oceans of poverty and privation. Haunted by the spectre of rebellion, these political and financial elites wallow in immediate pleasures and rewards." 3) to link the regimes to the centers of international finance and the great powers even further, for their protection and in the

interest of the West itself. Thus, everywhere in the land of Islam and particularly in the Arab world, we find a "fundamental and inexorable association between Westernization, violence and exploitation, including under the aegis of the so-called socialistic models."

From this analysis, the author draws a conclusion he labels as "crucial" and which at first appears to be rather unexpected. Paradoxically enough, it is neither a call for revolution or an appeal for the establishment of an Islamic state, but an appeal for democracy. The only requirement is that this democracy be granted to the specific concepts and interests of the society in question. The analysis places emphasis on the "need to root the political and social expectations of the masses in freedom and equality because freedom and also equality came to be in Europe within the framework of a special culture and representation of man, life and existence. How then can one speak of freedom and equality in the Muslim world in the absence of a thorough examination of our cultural background, of which Islam is the main axis, and without determining the place of these values in this culture? Our discourse on freedom and equality would no longer be a matter of slogans, but the quest of a new civilizational model that proceeds (both) from our Islamicness and our century. I mean by that not the Islam of decadence, but Islam as an overall revolution against despotism, exploitation and dependency in all its forms, as an insistent invitation to moral and material progress so that the idea may take root in the conscience of the masses that the fight for Islam is a fight for freedom, equality, dignity and progress, and that the opposite may also be true." Ghannouchi is a professor of philosophy and he visibly lacks neither in rigor nor in humor.

We chose this text because it illustrates better than any other, in our opinion, the nature of Islamism in Tunisia, compared with comparable movements in the Arab world, because it embodies all the changes that the movement has experienced since its creation. One obviously finds in it the now redundant criticism of the West, but the West is nevertheless considered as the pioneer in freedom and equality. Islam is in turn criticized in favor of only one of its possible interpretations. The ideal Islamic society is less situated in the golden age of the past than in the future and its form remains to be invented. The concern for maintaining a culture has gradually given way to the social and political concerns of a differentiated society.<sup>17</sup> Naturally, the analysis is sometimes guilty of exaggeration: The postulation of Islamism of the masses, the cosmopolitanism of the elites, the degree of isolation of the regimes: All this is highly debatable, just as one may frankly debate the ability of Islam, in any form, to give formal responses to the profane problems of the contemporary world. But one must admit that the analysis of Shaykh Ghannouchi has nothing to envy in that of the much more famous figures of the academic establishment such as Samir Amin, Ronald Dore or...Rene Dumont.

The text we have presented was drafted a year before the arrest of its author and the leadership of the MTI. Since that arrest, a new class of Islamists has emerged and taken over the command. To our knowledge, the author and the democratic bent it tried to give the movement continue to be honored. They will be all the more so because, for most of those interviewed, politicization was premature and led to blunders. Nevertheless, the fact remains that

Tunisia could be the first Arab country in which a contemporary Islamist movement would have a chance of becoming a civic force.

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- \* This study is part of a broader survey dealing, on the one hand, with the Islamic Tendency Movement, some 50 of whose members were interviewed, and, on the other hand, with a representative national sampling of 800 persons who were polled. It benefited from the cooperation of Mrs Aziza Dargouth Mdimegh with respect to the administration and use of the questionnaire. The results of the entire study will be published in the future.
- \*\* For didactic purposes, we are deferring the matter of the dissemination of Islamism to the second part of the study.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Samir Amin, "L'Economie du Maghreb," Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1966, pp 221-222.
2. For an enlightened reaction of a child of the system see Hela Beji, "Desenchantement National," Paris, Maspero, 1982.
3. Interview granted to Said Al-Nalouti, "La Presse Islamique en Tunisie. La Revue AL-MA'RIFAH," 1970-1980, Memoire, Institut de Presse, Tunis 1981.
4. S. A. Jourchi, interview in Abdellatif Hermassi, "Le Mouvement Integriste en Tunisie," Memoire, School of Letters and Humanities of Tunis, 1983, p 113.
5. R. El Channouchi and Hasan al-Turabi, "Le Mouvement Islamiste et la Modernisation," 1981. pp 25, 26, 29).
6. S. A. Jourchi, interview quoted.
7. Study by Sa'd-al-Din Ibrahim, sociologist, professor at the American University in Cairo, also published in English, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological and Preliminary Findings," in INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES, Vol 12, 1980, p 423-453.
8. "Education ou pas, d'Avenir Il n'y a Pas" [With or without education, there is no future] was the slogan of the lycee demonstrators in the 1970's.
9. Olivier Carre and Gerard Michaud, "Les Freres Musulmans (1928-1982), Collection Archives, Gallimard/Julliard, 1983.
10. See J. P. Benzecri and collaborators, "L'Analyse des Donnees," Paris, Dunod, 1976.

11. Launched, to general amazement, on 26 Ramadan 1975, by Hind Chelbi, young philosophy professor, at a conference on "Women in Islam," a televised conference requested by the chief of state. See MAGHREB-MACHREK, No 70, p 16.
12. Literally "to cross," the term used in Egypt since the October 1973 War to evoke sudden enrichment. The unexpected and rapid gains of the Egyptian Army on the east bank of the Suez Canal brought A. al-Sadat the nickname "Hero of the Crossing" (*Batal-al-'Ubur*).
13. One must add that the living conditions of the students are truly miserable compared with their elders who studied in France.
14. Rached El Ghannouchi "Da'wah ila al-Rushd" (An Invitation to the Age of Reason). MTI, Paris, 1982, pp 172-173.
15. Bernard Lewis, "The Return of Islam," in MIDDLE EAST REVIEW, Vol XII, No 1, 1979. See also A. Zghal, "The Return of the Sacred," New Ideological Demand of the Educated Young; the Case of Tunisia," in ANNUAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD, 1979, pp 61-64.
16. Reproduced in "Da'wath ila al-Rushd," op. cit.
17. The paradox is that as the Islamist movement is radicalized, its analysis, its approach, tend to gain in realism. That is what will appear in the second part of this study.

#### Economic Crisis in Tunisia: Crisis of Regulation

The crisis of regulation now experienced by dependent capitalism in Tunisia bears little similarity to the crisis of reorganization that has raged since the early 1970's in the ruling capitalist countries. This has to do with the basic difference between these two types of capitalism. In Tunisia, the capitalist sectors control the working process in practically no way, particularly with respect to two of its three component parts, to wit, equipment and the raw materials to be processed. The latter, essentially imported and therefore contingent, are not controlled technically or economically. Consequently, the sometimes dizzying rise in their purchase price is only partially compensated for by a gain in productivity.<sup>1</sup> In this case, the preservation and/or consolidation by capitalists of their rate of profit are difficult to guarantee by gains in productivity. They can only be so through artifices such as minimization of wage costs, fraud or tax exemptions, the artificial inflation of prices, and so on. These mechanisms, necessary in general in order to ensure a certain rate of profit for capital, become indispensable when the latter, forced to export the maximum possible in order to reproduce, must suffer foreign competition.

The process of regulating such a process of accumulation requires the support and permanent, increasingly massive intervention of the state. The latter,



gradually becoming a central pivot of economic activity, can only practice this policy of regulation through transfers of value between classes or fractions of classes, abandoning some and helping the others in terms of the political, economic and social situation. This shows that the policy of regulation requires that the state not only have material means, but above all, the ability to maintain a minimum of social cohesion.

However, for several years, the Tunisian Government has experienced increasing difficulty in reconciling these two demands: continuing to regulate the process of accumulation, while trying not to set off grave economic and/or social imbalances. That is why we can now speak of a crisis of regulation in Tunisia. Nevertheless, in order to understand the genesis of this crisis better, one must make a brief retrospective analysis of the policy of regulation practiced by the state since independence, which will enable us to understand better why, today, the latter is at an impasse.

#### 1960's, or Action by Prices To Minimize Wage Cost

During the 1960's, in order to maximize the rate of profit, the state essentially took action by the almost systematic freeze on nominal wages at a relatively low level. For example, the SMIG [interoccupational guaranteed minimum wage], fixed at a vital subsistence level and more or less determining the evolution of other wages, was only revised once throughout the entire period (1966). Two elements favored this lasting freeze on nominal wages. One is objective, meaning the relative control of prices of the main consumer products. The other is subjective, meaning the weakness of the working class.

Throughout the decade, consumer prices rose an average of 3.5 percent a year. This overall increase, in itself relatively low, was differentiated depending upon the group or subgroup of products. For example, consumer prices for products derived from grain, which at the time were still one of the basic foodstuffs of the workers, rose at a very slow rate: 1.6 percent on the average a year (see Tables 1 and 2). This relative control of consumer prices, by making it possible to contain their increase within tolerable limits, was possible thanks to:

the almost systematic freeze of prices to producers<sup>2</sup> on the main foodstuffs produced locally, particularly grain. In fact, prices of grain to producers were revised only once (1966). This freeze on prices to producers for the main agricultural products was helped by the absence of any organization of the farmers, the possibility of importing certain foodstuffs very cheaply, and the relative stability of agricultural production costs.

the favorable international situation, which enabled the country to buy its supplies of certain scarce products at low prices; and American gifts of certain basic food products (soft wheat, corn, soybean oil, and so on), within the framework of Public Law 480.

Finally, the relative reorganization of distribution circuits thanks to the establishment of government offices and the creation of consumer cooperatives, which made it possible to halt speculation to a great extent.

Table 1. Average Annual Growth Rate of Consumer Prices 1962-1970

Food	3.8%
Clothing	3.4%
Housing	2.5%
Health	3.5%
Transportation	5.3%
Entertainment	2.8%

Overall

3.5%

Source Tables 1, 2, 3:

National Institute of Statistics

Table 2. Average Annual Growth Rate of Consumer Prices for Main Food Products 1962-1970

Bread (670 g)	1.2%
Fine semolina	2.3%
Noodles	1.3%
Potatoes	6.5%
Mixed oil	-1.5%
Fresh milk	1.4%
Granulated sugar	-0.7%
Beef	8.6%
Live chickens	3.5%
Fish (mullet)	6.3%
Eggs	7.0%

Table 3. Index of Real Prices to Producers of Grain 1962-1970  
(Base figure 100 in 1962)

	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
Hard wheat	100	81	73	68	65	72	70	68	66
Soft wheat	100	95	86	80	77	92	90	88	85

These objective conditions, which over the course of the period made it possible to gain control of consumer prices and thereby wages, were consolidated by one subjective condition: the weak ability of the working class to fight. The latter, due to its intrinsic weaknesses (low awareness, amount of labor reserve, unscrupulous behavior of union leaders) was easily controlled, especially after 1965. In fact, from that time on, the UGTT, the only trade union confederation in the country, was decapitated and its structures completely dismantled. Consequently, it became, not the defender of the interests of its members vis-a-vis the government, but the government's defender to its members!

During the 1960's therefore, regulation of the process of accumulation was possible mainly due to the control of prices and wages. The cost of this regulation was mainly borne by three social fractions: the peasantry, the agrarian fraction of the bourgeoisie and, to a lesser extent, the wage earners. The cost borne by the peasants and the agrarian bourgeoisie is reflected in the deterioration of the terms of trade of the main agricultural commodities produced locally. For example, the index of the real price to producers<sup>3</sup> of

hard wheat, one of the main crops in the country, went from 100 in 1962 to only 66 in 1970 (see Table 3). As for the wage earners, the deterioration of their purchasing power is expressed by the drop in the level of real wages. The indexes of the SMIG and the real average wage<sup>4</sup> went from 100 in 1962 to 84 and 80 respectively in 1970 (see Table 4).

Table 4. Real Wage Index 1962-1970 (base figure of 100 in 1962)

	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
SMIG	100	97	93	87	93	91	88	84	4
Average Wage	100	99	100	90	89	91	86	83	80

Source: JOURNAL OFFICIEL DE LA REPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE (JORT)  
Survey of Industrial Activities, INS.

#### 1970's, or Action Through the Budget Via Oil Revenue

Compared with the 1960's, the following decade was marked by three main new elements that would determine a new form of regulating the process of accumulation: a reversal in the international situation, characterized, among other things, by a sharp increase in import prices of consumer products; a change in the ratio of force between ruling fractions and between the ruling class and the dominated class, mainly characterized by the rise in worker combativeness; the need to maximize exports, not only to meet the growing deficit in the trade balance, but above all, to unblock the process of accumulation in the enterprises.<sup>5</sup> This in turn required more than ever a minimization of wages as a production cost.

Table 5. Evolution of Import Prices of Main Food Products (in dinars/ton)

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
	<u>(1)</u>	<u>(2)</u>	<u>(2) (1)</u>
Sugar	45.3	206.3	4.6
Grain	39.3	91.0	2.3
Milk products	248.3	381.2	1.5

Source: Financial statistics of the Central Bank of Tunisia  
1 Tunisian dinar = 11.5 French francs

There was an abrupt change in the international situation, bringing about, among other things, an almost vertiginous increase in import prices, especially for food: up 355 percent for sugar, 131 percent for grain and 54 percent for milk products (Table 5). This sharp increase was worsened by the growing demand for these products: The imported volumes of grain more or less doubled and that of sugar rose by half during the period.

At the same time, one witnessed a more frequent upward revision of prices to producers for food products produced locally. That of grain in particular went up at an average annual rate of 7 percent, compared with a rate of about

2 percent during the preceding period. This increase in prices to producers was imposed by the strong increase in production costs. It also stems from the redefinition of dominant intergroup alliances, expressed by the relative strengthening of the position of the agrarian fraction of the bourgeoisie.<sup>6</sup>

This new situation, characterized by a strong increase in prices of imports as well as in prices to producers of consumer goods, particularly food products, confronted political leaders with three possible options at the time:

1) either unfreeze consumer prices, while increasing nominal wages, which not only risked altering profits, but above all, making Tunisian exports uncompetitive, as the relatively low wage level was the only comparative advantage local capital had. This solution was therefore in contradiction with the main demand at the time, to wit, unblocking the process of accumulation at the execution level.

2) or freeing consumer prices, while freezing nominal wages, which risked resulting in a strong deterioration of the purchasing power of wage earners and consequently causing serious social disturbances. Given a more combative working class than was previously the case,<sup>7</sup> this solution therefore risked doing grave harm to social cohesion.

3) or artificially reducing consumer prices, which would make it possible to contain to the maximum extent the increase in nominal wages, while protecting the purchasing power of wage earners and assuring Tunisian exports a minimum competitiveness. This solution, which will be finally adopted, for it alone would make it possible to preserve a minimum of socioeconomic balance for the time being, required a massive intervention on the part of the state, as the artificial reduction of consumer prices could only come about through state subsidies.

In fact, during the 1970's, the average annual growth rate of consumer prices was on the order of 7 percent, or double the preceding period. However, this rate would have been much higher without the artificial compression brought about by the state and this through two main instruments: the General Compensation Fund (CGC) and state subsidies to enterprises and public organizations.

From negligible at the beginning of the decade (2.7 million dinars in 1971), the expenses of the Fund experienced a veritable escalation, especially beginning in 1974, the date of the reversal in the international situation. Between 1971 and 1980, the total expenditures amounted to 472 million dinars,<sup>8</sup> or the equivalent on the average of 15.5 percent of the operating expenditures of the state, and 20 percent of its capital expenditures. These expenditures of the CGC essentially served to subsidize the prices of three food products (grain, mixed oil and sugar) and of two nonfood products (fertilizer and fuel) serving as production costs in agriculture, industry or services, which directly or indirectly amounts to subsidizing consumer prices.



As for state subsidies granted to public organizations and enterprises, they totaled the sum of 1,085,000.000 dinars<sup>9</sup> over the same decade, or an average of 17 percent of total state spending. This rate more than doubled between 1971 (8.8 percent) and 1980 (18.2 percent). These state subsidies mainly served to directly or indirectly contain consumer prices of certain products and services (agricultural products, housing, water, electricity, medicines, transportation, and so on).

At the time, the essential means enabling the state to meet this massive commitment through multifaceted subsidies was oil revenue, for with respect to regular tax receipts, the government had to withstand major losses. Aiming to maintain the rate of profits and especially encourage exports, it was led to grant major financial bonuses and tax exemptions to capital.<sup>10</sup>

State revenue from oil activity represented scarcely some 30 million dinars in 1971. In 1981, they reached the appreciable total of 370 million dinars, having increased more than tenfold in 10 years. For the entire decade from 1972 to 1981, this oil revenue amounted to 843 million dinars, compared with only 51 million for the 1962-1971 period. It represented on the average 16 percent of the total state receipts. We therefore notice that in the absence of this oil income, the regulation of the process of accumulation as practiced during this period would have been impossible. In addition, this growing importance of oil income has made it possible to amortize the cost of regulation borne by the previously neglected classes of society, to wit, the peasantry, the agrarian portion of the bourgeoisie and the working class. Actually, the peasantry and agrarian bourgeoisie continued to suffer a deterioration in their real income, but at a much slower rate than in the 1960's. As for the wage earners, they were able to improve their purchasing power appreciably, especially beginning in 1975-1976, thanks to their own struggle and to the state's margin of room to contain consumer prices, a margin helped by the existence of oil income<sup>11</sup> (see Tables 6 and 7).

In sum, one can say that over this decade, the social cost of regulating the process of accumulation was not as high as that of the 1960's, thanks to the very high oil revenue which the government had. In other words, in order to protect the present -- that is, in order not to sharpen its socioeconomic imbalances too greatly, the country had to mortgage its future because in the final analysis, oil income essentially served only to support an increasingly artificial, extraverted and contradictory process of accumulation. The flaws in this policy would be fully exposed at the beginning of the 1980's, when the growth in oil income would slow down.

#### 1980's: Search for New Form of Regulation, or the End of a Logic

Since the beginning of the 1980's, it has been observed that the socioeconomic limitations that determined the form of regulation of the 1970's have persisted and even grown worse. Prices of the main food products have continued to rise. For example, between 1977-1979 and 1980-1982, the rise in import prices was an average of 90 percent for sugar, 65 percent for soft wheat, 51 percent for corn, 49 percent for hard wheat and milk products. Only the price of

Table 6. Evolution of Index of Real Prices to Producers of Hard Wheat

Base 100 in 1962

Base 100 in 1972

<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>
1962	100	1972	100
1963	81	1973	95
1964	73	1974	94
1965	68	1975	93
1966	65	1976	91
1967	72	1977	94
1968	70	1978	95
1969	68	1979	91
1970	66	1980	93
1971	61	1981	92

Source: Statistical Yearbooks of Tunisia

Table 7. Evolution of Real SMIG Index

Base 100 in 1962

Base 100 in 1972

<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>
1962	100	1972	100
1963	97	1973	96
1964	93	1974	115
1965	87	1975	111
1966	93	1976	111
1967	91	1977	136
1968	88	1978	140
1969	84	1979	143
1970	84	1980	147
1971	91	1981	158

Source: JORT  
Statistical Yearbooks of Tunisia

soybean oil dropped slightly. For their part prices to producers of the main food products produced locally also experienced an appreciable increase. Between 1977-1979 and 1980-1982, that increase was 44 percent for olive oil, 31 percent for hard wheat and barley and 28 percent for soft wheat.<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious that in the face in this increase in import prices and prices to producers of the main food products and in the absence of a proportionate increase in their consumer price, the Compensation Fund had to pay out larger and larger sums: 77 million dinars in 1980, 146 million in 1981, 168 million in 1982 and 183 million in 1983, an increase of 137 percent in three years. However, at the same time, oil revenue, which had previously enabled the

state to artificially reduce consumer prices on a large scale, began to level out. The drop in oil production and the trend toward stagnation and even a reduction in its prices on the world market are the main causes.<sup>13</sup>

Faced with these inextricable contradictions into which it had slid, the state, acting as such,<sup>14</sup> tried to make the privileged population sectors bear part of the cost of regulation. Certain provisions of the 1983 Budget were part of that perspective. These provisions were aimed at increasing regular government receipts through tighter fiscal control of the social classes that were cheating on taxes the most, particularly manufacturers and merchants. These measures were all the more poorly accepted because they coincided with an intensive campaign on the part of trade unions<sup>15</sup> and a campaign to control the fixation of prices to producers.<sup>16</sup> For the first time, the capitalists felt that the traditional means they were using to preserve and increase their profit, to wit, tax fraud and exploitation of the wage earner and consumer, might escape them at the same time. To tighten the screw, they did not hesitate to react by using blackmail, proceeding to make excessive layoffs and even close plants. They rejected the application of certain collective bargaining agreements, even though they had signed them, before the establishment of minimum norms of productivity.<sup>17</sup> What is more, they went so far as to slow down and even cease all new investments.<sup>18</sup>

Given this counteroffensive on the part of those who held economic power, the state finally capitulated. In June 1983, the prime minister brought management and owners together and assured them that the government was willing to go back on any measure that might hurt their interests,<sup>19</sup> which was quickly accomplished. The campaign to control industrial prices, undertaken with great publicity a few months previously, was quickly shelved. In addition, the supplementary budget of 30 July 1983 abrogated most provisions of the 1983 Budget aimed at reducing tax fraud and making the wealthy pay a little more.<sup>20</sup> But by yielding to capitalist pressure, the state once again faced difficult choices. The latter were practically reduced to two: either return to truth in prices and wages, doing away with any means of artificially compressing consumer prices and consequently increasing nominal wages (but this "solution" came into contradiction with the need to maximize exports, a basic requirement for the continuation of the process of accumulation); or free consumer prices while blocking wages or barely increasing them.

For some time, several signs have proved that the state is gradually moving toward this last solution. One might point out:

1) the decision to make certain public services run in the black, services previously provided free for the poorer classes of the population. This is the case of care in public hospitals, which had to be paid for starting in January 1983. The Sixth Plan for 1982-1986 even requires payment for certain departments of education.

2) with regard to the setting of prices, the passage, for many categories of industrial products, from certification to self-certification (November 1982).<sup>21</sup>

3) the heavy increase in the past several months in consumer prices of certain products or services provided by public enterprises (water, electricity, medicines, transportation, and so on). For example, in October 1983, prices of public transportation rose an average of 16 percent. These measures were aimed at reducing state subsidies to public enterprises to the maximum extent.

4) the trend toward at least partial private ownership of certain strategic activities, for example, in the field of transportation (decided in October 1983). The government thus sought to relieve itself of the chronic deficit of public enterprises in the sector.

5) the decision made by the government in October 1983 to do away with compensation for grain and grain by-products starting in 1984, which would immediately result in at least a doubling of their prices to the consumer. This measure will represent a savings of at least two-thirds of the state's compensation burden.<sup>22</sup>

All these measures, coming one right after the other, lead one to think that in the 1980's, it is essentially the working class that will bear the cost of regulating the process of accumulation. Consequently, the main question posed is the following: Will the working class, which for several years has demonstrated great endurance and perseverance, agree to bear by itself all these sacrifices in the future? The response naturally depends on the ratio of strength that will be established between the opposing classes or class factions. Whatever the case, the 1980's promise heated social conflicts, for when regulation by economic reaches its limits, it is regulation by political means -- that is, intense repression of the ruling classes -- that usually takes its place.

30 November 1983

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The difficulties encountered by Tunisian capitalists in improving the productivity of their enterprises are shown in this excerpt from an editorial in *LA TUNISIE ECONOMIQUE*, a journal published by the management organization UTICA [Tunisian Union for Industry, Trade and Handicrafts]: "For the time being, there are many obstacles standing in the way of the action of Tunisian enterprises. There is, however, one question whose solution presents a matter of urgency because it is at the root of most of the evils from which Tunisian business now suffers: poor productivity. It is thanks to high productivity that the new industrial countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong have been able to impose their products on all markets. Given the burdens it bears -- which are three to four times greater than those borne in the abovementioned countries -- it is obvious that Tunisian business will never be able to put up serious competition, even though the other obstacles would be removed" (see December 1980 issue). According to this excerpt it should be noted that Tunisian capitalists confuse, consciously or unconsciously, mastery of the labor process and acceleration of the speed of work, for in



comparing themselves with the capitalists in countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, and so on, they forget that in those countries the appreciable improvement in productivity is not essentially the fruit of better mastery of the work process, but rather, of an acceleration of the speed of work at a rate rarely seen elsewhere, naturally at the price of harsh repression of the working class. This is what Tunisian capitalists want, furthermore, for they have for several years been asking for the establishment of productivity norms -- that is, a return to piece work.

2. Prices for production are those paid to producers.
3. The index of the real price to producers is obtained by deflating the index of the nominal price to producers by the index of wholesale prices of all products.
4. The real wage index is obtained by deflating the index of the nominal wage by the consumer price index.
5. During the 1960's, the process of accumulation was based on what one calls the industries making import substitutes, aimed at meeting the local demand for previously imported products. This local demand has dropped, mainly because of the deterioration in purchasing power of the peasants and wage earners of which we have spoken, and the process of accumulation has been blocked. Speaking of this vital need to maximize exports, the former prime minister, Hedi Nouira, said "We must examine our development in relation to the rest of the outside world and the entire international market. The new dimension of our industrial development during the 1970-1980 period must be exports. Exports must therefore be the main axis of our industrial development." (6 December 1976 speech)
6. For example, between 1971 and 1980, production costs of grain and oil rose by 10.6 and 9.8 percent an average per year, which, despite the upward trend of prices to producers, resulted in a deterioration of terms of trade of these commodities. However, the latter was less important than during the 1960's, which is why we speak of a "relative" strengthening of the position of the agrarian bourgeoisie.
7. During the 1970's, the rise in the workers' ability to fight was demonstrated by a clear increase in struggles connected with demands, prompted by the new dynamics within the working class. Actually, during the first half of the decade, real wages tended to stagnate and even sometimes drop (1973, 1975, 1976). Struggles engaged by wage earners were then mainly aimed at protecting their purchasing power. But in the heat of these struggles, the working class, younger and less resigned than was previously the case, discovered in collective, organized combat an effective means enabling it to win their cause frequently. Consequently, it gradually became aware of its strength. This new awareness was all the more rapid because the relative material situation of wage earners had constantly deteriorated. For example, from 41.3 percent in 1971, the share of the

GNP of wage earners dropped to 36.4 percent in 1976 and only 33.5 percent in 1981. This is why, during the second half of the decade, wage earners began to demand, not only protection of their purchasing power but also, their share of the fruits of growth.

8. Including 347 million dinars paid out by the Fund, and 125 million accumulated unpaid. In principle the CGC receives its funds through parafiscal taxes essentially levied on alcoholic beverages and fuel. Between 1978 and 1980, a special compensation tax was instituted, affecting a large number of imported products. In principle, when the expenditures of the Fund exceed receipts, the government makes up the deficit by budgetary allocations (5 million dinars in 1970, 15 million in 1975). Beginning in 1977, the deficit was not corrected and the Fund accumulated the unpaid balances.
9. These are subsidies for balancing, operations and equipment.
10. The law of April 1972 and that of August 1974 are the main texts that grant these advantages to capital.
11. It should be recalled that while the material situation of wage earners improved in absolute terms during the 1970's it has not ceased deteriorating in relative terms. The share of the GNP of wage earners went from 41.3 percent in 1971 to 33.5 percent in 1981. It is this divergence between the absolute improvement and the relative deterioration in the level of income of wage earners that in our opinion greatly explains the bloody confrontations between the UGTT and the government in January 1978. It is also this divergence that explains the perseverance of the workers' struggles during the 1980's.
12. If one considers the latest measure taken by the Council of Ministers on 3 November 1983, the price of grain to producers (in dinars per quintal) went, between 1977 and 1983, from 7.135 to 14 for hard wheat, from 6.535 to 14 for soft wheat, and from 5.035 to 10 for barley, or more than double in six years. Previously, prices of grain to the producers took about 20 years to double. This sharp increase in prices to producers of grain will not stop as long as Tunisian agriculture remains dependent on other countries for most of its consumable expenditures (machinery, fertilizer, especially nitrogenous fertilizer, insecticides, and so on). In the opinion of leaders, it is enough to raise prices to producers of agricultural products to prevent a total collapse of agriculture. What is more, in order to ward off this possibility, the government has in recent years been forced to take a set of measures on behalf of farmers. One might cite the establishment of an Agency To Promote Agricultural Investments (APIA), aimed at approving agricultural projects enjoying financial bonuses and tax exemptions along with industrial or tourist projects. This will not fail to increase the burdens or losses borne by the state, without in any way solving the problem of farm prices.
13. Actually, after reaching the maximum in 1980 with 5.6 million tons, oil production dropped to 5.4 million in 1981 and 5.1 million in 1982.

As for oil export prices, they rose at an average annual rate of 36 percent between 1977 and 1980, compared with only 16 percent in 1980-1982. In 1983, those prices are even expected to drop.

14. We say "acting as such" because the state can for a time sacrifice certain immediate interests of the ruling class in order to ensure its long-term interests. The Tunisian Government tried this at the beginning of the 1980's, without great success.
15. Actually, 1982 and 1983 were the years for revising collective contracts, frozen since 1973-1974. This revision enabled wage earners to sometimes substantially consolidate some gains. In addition, since 1980, following the restoration of the UGTT following its breakup in 1978, wage earners succeeded in achieving substantial wage increases. For example, the nominal SMIG went from 239 million per hour in January 1980 to 457 million in June 1983, an increase of 91 percent in under 3 years.
16. In November 1982, 140 auditors, working in teams, were asked by the minister of economy to audit prices set by manufacturers and the quality of their products. These operations revealed enormous abuses and brought about the closing of some plants. The journal of the Destourian Socialist Party, DIALOGUE, wrote in its 3 January 1983 issue: "The sweeps of the economic inspection teams demonstrated, by virtue of the extent of the violations and number of infractions, that abuses and speculation seriously risked affecting the country's commercial and industrial honesty."
17. These abuses of the capitalists were vigorously denounced by the trade union confederation. In the motion emanating from the Administrative Commission meeting on 29-30 July 1983, the UGTT "denounced the non-application of certain collective agreements, certain statutes, on the part of certain owners and establishments; firmly condemned the attitude of some owners and heads of public establishments regarding their manifest scorn for the rights of workers, going so far as to decide to close their establishments, engage in abusive layoffs and reduce work schedules."
18. Actually, the statistics of the Agency to Promote Investments reveal that in the course of the first six months of 1983, there had been a drop in the number of projects approved and in the level of investments and jobs.
19. Commenting on this meeting, the DIALOGUE editorialist wrote: "Businessmen, working in offices and in the field, are not right to be afraid or to be eaten away by doubt. If the international economic crisis lasts, it is no reason to decide that Tunisia must capitulate economically, when everything points to definite means of bringing about a recovery and revival" (No 456, July 1983).
20. To show its approval of this capitulation of the government to the wealthy, the UGTT Administrative Commission, at its meeting of 29-30 July 1983, "recalled, following the new amendments made in the budget, that it has always demanded the adoption of a tax policy serving the interests of the

lower classes and of wage earners in particular." It should also be noted that this is not the first time that the government has yielded to the pressure of the wealthy. The 1977 Budget, also aimed at tightening tax control, experienced the same fate as that of 1983. Such successive capitulations on the part of the government prove that it is less and less capable of playing its role as the guarantor of a minimum of social cohesion.

21. In the system of approval, it is the government that sets the cost of the product and the profit margin applicable to it. In the system of self approval, it is the enterprise itself that determines its cost and applies the profit margin to it.
22. These are the terms used to announce this decision made by the Council of Ministers at its meeting of 24 October 1983: "The Council, at the beginning of its meeting, heard a report by the minister of national economy on the evolution of expenditures of the General Compensation Fund in recent years and estimated expenditures for the 1984 year. The minister emphasized that the CGC, which was set up to face situational difficulties, has seen its intervention take a structural form implying increasingly heavy financial burdens, mainly because of the increase in world prices. The cumulated deficit of the CGC exceeds some 100 million dinars in 1984. Because of the upward trend of CGC burdens and in order to relieve budget charges and ensure better use of public resources, it has become necessary to reduce the intervention of the Fund."

(Note: All texts presented above were written before the events of December 1983 and January 1984. One may judge their pertinence in understanding, if not explaining, those events. Even though one must always beware of subsequent rationalizations, the least one can say is that the reader of these three articles will be scarcely surprised by the mechanism and scope of the days of rioting Tunisia experienced (see in this issue and the following the chronologies of MAGHREB-MACHREK).)

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